

Glad Tidings

January/February 2011



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*I am about to do
a new thing;
now it spring forth,
do you not perceive it?*

Isaiah 43:19a

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Glad Tidings challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally.

Glad Tidings through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action.

Glad Tidings provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.



Colleen Wood

From the Editor's Desk

Do you make New Year's resolutions? I don't—usually. It's not that there is nothing that I need to change about myself, but I just prefer trying to make gradual improvements (and setbacks!) over time, and not make a huge deal out of it! Most of us have enough stress in our life without adding more, especially since we are also recovering from the overindulgence of the Christmas Season (too much to eat, too little sleep, and no regular routine).

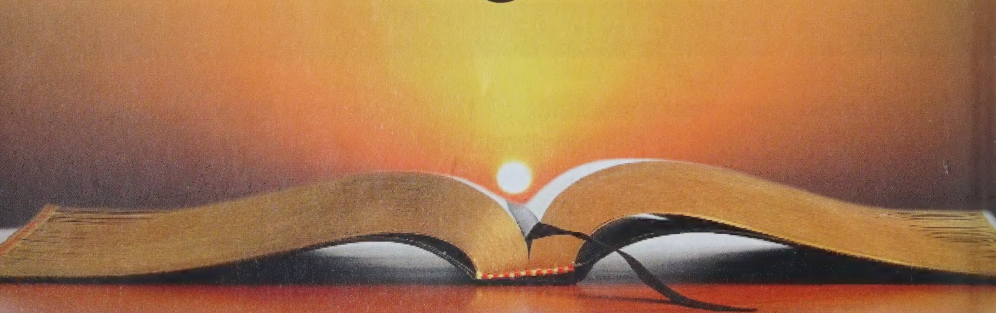
But this year might be different. I know that sometimes my personal devotions take a backseat to other things. As a mom of two young children, that usually means sleep, but sometimes it means an evening run, or just relaxing with my husband. But this month's edition of *Glad Tidings* has me excited about the Bible again! Hearing of the number of young children almost begging for their evening Bible reading (and you can include my son in that), makes me want to read the Bible again for me—not just for him. Hearing from so many friends and colleagues about their own favourite Bible stories and passages, makes me want to read mine over again. So this year, my New Year's resolution, or at least the area I most want to improve, is finding time for more Bible reading.

As we begin 2011, I know where I will be on May 20–23. I can't wait to attend the National Presbyterian Women's Gathering. As I write this, registrations are coming in fast and furious for the November 15 early bird deadline, but remember that registrations will be accepted for the event until March 31. So it is not too late. In this edition of *Glad Tidings*, you will receive one last article from our keynote speaker, Dr. Margaret Somerville. I encourage you to read it when you have time to really think about it. She is a fascinating writer with much to share. I expect she will spark much debate and conversation at the event and I hope to be a part of that!

I leave you with my favourite Bible verse as you look towards a new year, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13 NRSV)

May God be with you and give you strength in 2011!

Listening for God



Church Practice and Private Devotion

by Richard Topping

People read the Bible for different reasons. English students may read it for literary delight and as the source of many literary allusions in Western writing. Scholars sometimes read the Bible as a source of information about early Christian communities and ancient Israelite religion. Students of Greek and Hebrew focus on grammatical structures and vocabulary as they master the rudiments of a language other than their own. All of these reasons for reading the Bible have their place and purpose. All of them can help the Christian community read the Bible more faithfully, truthfully, and accurately.

Christians want to read the Bible in keeping with its literary conventions, the meaning of its words, and with an understanding of the diverse historical and cultural contexts from which it comes. Various resources like Bible dictionaries, concordances, commentaries, and literary guides are available to help us.

However, Christians read the Bible as Scripture, which is to say Christians read the Bible as a single book, Old and New Testament, as a creation to end of the age story. Reading the Bible as Scripture also means that Christians read the Bible as an authority. Our

creedal traditions (like the Apostles' Creed) and our liturgical practices tell us a great deal about how to read the books of Scripture together in a unity. The Bible, a certain set of books, and the pattern by which it is read, are what marks a reading of the Bible as Scriptural or authoritative reading.

Imagine a Sunday morning in most Presbyterian, indeed most Christian, churches. The Bible is often brought into the sanctuary and placed on the lectern. It is the only book we read in church and we work with a closed literary canon. Very often there are multiple copies of the Bible in the pews—Old and New Testament—inevitably pressed between the same two covers. Our liturgical practice is most often to read at least a couple of lessons—Old and then New Testament, sometimes Old Testament, Psalm, Epistle, and the Gospel. The fact that we read the Bible and read it according to a certain ordered pattern engrains in Christians a reading practice that stretches back to the beginnings of the Church. What was promised in the law, the prophets, and the writings is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. One Reformed theologian, Karl Barth, says Christians read the whole Bible to discern “the Word in the words.”

While the events, persons, and practices of the Old Testament have meaning in their own right, their fuller

sense is found in Christ, who is the fulfillment of God's work in the world. This pattern of reading can be found in the Bible itself. One powerful example can be found in the story of the crucifixion as portrayed by John's Gospel. Jesus asks for a drink when he is crucified. A soldier dips a sponge in vinegar and raises it to Jesus' lips on a hyssop branch. John's theme throughout his gospel is that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. When Jesus dies in John's Gospel, it happens at the same time as the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb. The hyssop branch raised to Jesus, the dying Lamb of God, harkens back to the blood of the lamb spread on the doorposts of the children of Israel as they leave Egypt. The blood of the lamb spread with a hyssop branch saves them from death. The Passover of Exodus points toward and finds a fuller sense in Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the entire world. An interpretative

**One Reformed theologian,
Karl Barth, says Christians
read the whole Bible to discern
“the Word in the words.”**

current passes between the Old Testament and New Testament. Augustine, an early church leader, once said, “in

the Old Testament Christ is concealed; in the New Testament Christ is revealed.”

Creeds, like the Apostles’ Creed, are guides to good Bible reading. Protestants don’t believe creeds are infallible, but they are useful measures

The Bible is clear and sufficient to speak to us about salvation and new life through Christ.

of how those before us in the faith—our spiritual mothers and fathers—read the Bible as Scripture of the Church. Have you ever noticed, for example, that the Apostles’ Creed isn’t weighted by the volume of material in the Bible? It is longest in its second article about Jesus Christ—his birth, life, death, resurrection, and coming again. What’s more the creed has a Trinitarian structure and is at the same time a short-hand summary of the basic grammar of the whole story the Bible tells. I used to say to my confirmation class that the Apostles’ Creed is like Coles notes on the Bible. What the Creed seems to be telling us is that the Bible, all these books bound together in one book, was read by Christians according to a Trinitarian and Christ-centred pattern. To read the Bible scripturally then is to follow this pattern embedded in the Bible itself and distilled in the Creed.

We follow a pattern when we read the Bible in Church, one that individual Christians follow in their personal readings whenever the public pattern takes hold in the life of a disciple of Christ. However, have you noticed that

in most Presbyterian congregations there is a prayer either before the reading of the Bible or the sermon? We call that prayer, a prayer for illumination. This prayer is an invocation of

the Holy Spirit. A prayer like that tells us a great deal about reading the Bible as *Holy* Scripture.

I have sometimes prayed before reading lessons in church. “Gracious God, grant us now that most excellent gift of your Holy Spirit, that in your light we might see light, and in your truth find freedom.” Lest we listen to the Bible and set ourselves up as judge and jury over it, we pray that God would make lucid to us God’s own word. In a sense our prayer is that God would take the words of text and preacher and requisition them to God’s own end. We’re asking for increased amplitude, the divine annexation of human speech. Why? Well, the Bible is clear and sufficient to speak to us about salvation and new life through Christ, but we resist what it has to say. We blame the author or the preacher for obscurity, and the latter may be the

case. But often the problem isn't with what the Bible or the preacher says; it is with what we are willing to hear.

Imagine that I come to church believing that what I have belongs to me. I've been schooled by living in this part of the world to believe that what I've bought is private property—my stuff. The lesson for that Sunday is about the early Church of the Book of Acts, where people had “all things in common” and where wealthy people liquidated their land to give to those who had little. I am now faced with a hard choice: Will I read my world in the light of the Bible (in which case I am moved to share) or the Bible in the light of my private property world (in which case I dismiss the Bible as ‘unrealistic’). Apart from a liberating miracle I won't, even can't, listen and heed the Word. I don't want to hear this divine claim on me and what I have and about generosity touched off in others by the gospel of Jesus Christ. I might just work a scholarly move to open up some distance between my world and that world. Truth is I am protecting myself from what God is saying to me by means of that text. I might even mutter to the Minister at the door, “that's not realistic,” but that's only because I am so shaped by the time in which I live that I can't imagine generosity born of the Gospel in me.

This is why we pray for the Holy Spirit to illumine and teach us, to make good our faulty self-interested reception

of the message broadcast in the Bible. A friend of mine likes to say that Scripture reading is all about dying and rising with Christ. Praying for illumination takes guts. Hearing the Word of God can be an experience of judgment on us. However, it is always a judging-saving word. God loves us as we are, but too much to leave us that way.

Again, our personal readings of the Bible are guided by the public use of the Bible as Holy Scripture of the Church. Prayer that the Holy Spirit would make us permeable to the message of the Gospel recorded in Scripture is crucial. If we are going to do more than hear ourselves think when we read or listen to Scripture, it will be God's work in us. I think something like this consideration was at work in the thoughts of Martin Luther King, Jr. who wrote: “Sometimes Aunt Jane on her knees can get more truth than the philosopher on his tiptoes.”

To read the Bible as Scripture involves careful attention to what we learn in church. Christians want to hear the Word of the Lord. And so we read just the Bible, we read the Bible as Scripture, the record of the promise and coming of Christ, and we read the Bible as Holy Scripture, asking for the Spirit's teaching so that we may hear and live by the Word of God.

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Digging for Treasure

by Lezlie Allison

Almost 350 years ago, Robert Leighton wrote of God's timeless word that it is the "golden mine in which alone the abiding treasures of eternity are to be found, and therefore worth all the digging and pains we can bestow on them." This treasure field of truth yet remains untouched by more than 350 million people today, who continue without a translation of the Bible into a language that speaks to their hearts. And so, with a great desire to make this treasure accessible to all—we 'dig'—labouring along with the other almost 5,000 missionaries with Wycliffe Bible Translators around the world.

How many languages are spoken in the world today? Would you be surprised to learn that it is more than 6,900? Only 451 of these languages have a complete Bible available, and 1,185 of them have a New Testament translation. With ever increasing technological developments at our fingertips, the work of Bible translation is progressing at a faster rate today than ever before; nevertheless, a tremendous amount of 'digging' remains.

For our family, the small field we are digging away in is located in northern Cameroon. We dig in faith, trusting that the treasure of God's word will be discovered and valued as more precious than gold by the Kotoko people. We dig among them, having found this treasure already for ourselves, this treasure that points us to and reveals Jesus Christ, our precious Saviour and our glorious Lord.

When we moved to the village of Makary, Cameroon, in the spring of 1999, there was no written language for the 16,000 speakers of Makary

Kotoko; neither was there a single known Kotoko Christian. Our first task was to begin to learn to speak this language. Having no alphabet, it was especially challenging to learn since we had to rely exclusively on what we heard and could not refer to a handy manual on 'How to speak Kotoko'. In time, we began to recognize where the strings of sounds we heard broke up into individual words, how events were situated in time, how pronouns were used to mark who did what to whom, how tone affected the meaning of words, and countless other details

of the language. Eventually we developed a Kotoko alphabet and then we could start writing down in a standardized form what we were hearing.

We then began collecting and recording folk tales, stories that had been passed down orally generation after generation among the Kotoko people. For the first time, these stories were being written down, now to be preserved for generations to come. We also began translating basic health manuals and ones emphasizing the importance of clean hands and drinking water. We also conducted an introductory literacy course in the village, teaching individuals how to teach their own family and friends how to read and write the Kotoko language. Most exciting of all to us, we began translating scripture portions, bit by bit, beginning with Genesis and most of Exodus and also moving ahead with the gospels of Matthew and Mark.

In the Fall of 2007, at the request of the Wycliffe leadership in Cameroon, Sean began a doctoral study program in Linguistics at the University of Colorado at Boulder. We are currently three years into this endeavour. The physical adjustments for our family have been easy to make in this move from our village in Cameroon to Colorado ... switching from the use of solar energy to having all the power and running water we need; from squirting ourselves with water bottles in an attempt to keep cool enough to sleep in the sweltering heat of the semi-desert to piling on enough blankets to be warm enough to sleep in snowy Colorado; and from stocking up

every few months to buy the groceries we need in our supply town four hours away to zipping to the grocery store whenever we run low on milk or bread or whatever else this family with four growing kids needs to keep fed. But we miss living among the Kotoko people and the gentle pace of life in the village.

With a Ph.D. in linguistics under Sean's belt (projected completion date of study is Fall of 2011 or Spring of 2012), we are hoping to be more effective at the Kotoko translation of scriptures yet to be completed. Sean is also looking to be a linguistic consultant for other missionaries in Cameroon, helping them as they dig away on their own fields of translation. In addition, we would love to be part of training young missionaries just preparing to go overseas as Bible translators, inspiring and challenging them to dig and sweat and do whatever it takes to help make God's word available in an understandable language to every single group of people in the world.

Those 350 million people I mentioned earlier who still live without translated scripture represent only a small portion of the world's approximately six billion people. Most of these languages remaining with a translation need are called minority languages ... they are small groups of people who often struggle to maintain their individual, unique identities while living under the overarching influences of a majority culture. Bible translation and literacy serve these language groups in varied ways, practical as well as spiritual. With medical information within reach,

health conditions slowly improve. Economic growth also can occur as literacy increases marketable skills. And a written history helps preserve a culture which otherwise might be in danger of fading over time under the shadow of a stronger, more influential one. The local church is strengthened with the translated Bible as its foundation for truth. And most important of all, God's translated word transforms hearts and lives as individuals are given a clear picture of God as he is revealed through Jesus Christ.

Some might question the economy of investing so many resources in developing these small unwritten languages so that the Bible can be translated into them. Though the term 'minority' is used to describe these languages, we do not believe God thinks of them in this light. Consider for a minute the parable Jesus told of the shepherd who had 100 sheep but who lost one. One out of a hundred sheep ... that's pretty 'minor' in my book. Did the shepherd figure at the end of the day that he'd done pretty well keeping up with the 'majority' of his sheep and headed home satisfied with that? Certainly not, according to Luke 15:4-7. Jesus asks if the shepherd does not instead "leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?" *Until he finds it*—even if it means sending and equipping missionaries year after year to dig and search until

every single sheep is safely brought to the shepherd's shoulders. "And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing." We trust that the shepherd's rejoicing over each and every found sheep will eventually be followed by great rejoicing from these very sheep over the lamb of God himself. Revelation 5:9 describes a new song in heaven sung by those found ones, "Worthy are You ... for You were slain, and by Your blood You ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation." *Every language* the verse says—not just the 'majority' languages, the really important languages in the world's view, but even those small ones with only a few hundred speakers or a few thousand as is the case with the Kotoko. So we dig and will keep digging in hopeful faith that one day we will sing side by side in heaven with Kotoko believers, our fellow found sheep, worshipping our glorious king forever.



Planting Seeds of Hope for Generations to Come

How Planned Gifts Are Growing
the Church and Its Mission



Photo credit: Lawrence Pentelow



When Colonel John Bayne Maclean, a child of the manse and founder of Maclean's magazine, died in 1950, he left 250 acres of his beloved "Crieff Hills Farm" to The Presbyterian Church in Canada, along with a generous endowment to provide continued monetary support to help maintain the property. Today Crieff Hills Community, near Guelph, Ontario, provides "a place apart to come together" for hundreds who come each year for conferences, workshops and personal retreats. Through Colonel Maclean's planned gift, his farmland continues to provide a rich harvest of lives transformed and renewed.

What will your legacy be ...

To learn more about this ministry and how your
planned gifts can make a lasting difference, visit

www.presbyterian.ca/calendar



Sharing the Bible with Children

by Laura Alar

Children and the Bible: A Dilemma

Almost seven years ago, the Bible and children came together in my own life in a very personal way. In November 2003, I received my Ph.D. in New Testament; the next month, my first child was born. As I sat at home with my newborn baby, I contemplated how I might connect these two different parts of my life. I had spent years studying and teaching the Bible among adults. I was aware of its complexity, its contradictions, its troubling passages. So now I found myself asking: What do I want to teach my own child about the Bible? And how should I go about doing it?

A few things were clear to me. I wanted my children to be knowledgeable about the Bible; I wanted them to have a grasp of its content, its historical and cultural background, and how it came to us as scripture. But while factual knowledge was important, I wanted something more. I wanted my children to relate to the Bible in a personal way. I wanted the stories and symbols and images which have shaped the identity of the people of God to become part of their own identity. I wanted them to feel connected to a community spanning time and space. I wanted them to have first-hand experience of the Bible as a revelatory book—a place where God meets us, speaks to us, challenges us,

and shapes us into the people God intends us to be.

What was not so clear to me was how to convey all of this to a young child.

A Cradle for Faith

Children are naturally open to encountering God. But unless they are given a way to describe and interpret these experiences, their budding relationship with God often withers before it ever has a chance to flower. Children do not automatically grow into a mature faith; they need to be nurtured. Catherine Stackhouse uses the image of a cradle to describe how the Bible—and other religious language and imagery—can help in this task of nurturing new-born faith. The Bible is rich in words and symbols which children need to express their own understanding of God; it overflows with stories which can help children ponder and make sense of their own experiences; it invites children to enter a world where God is alive and active.¹

Years ago when a friend and her husband moved house, their three-year-old young son piled stones in the living room of their new home because—like Abraham and Sarah—he wanted to build an altar to thank God for being with them in this new and unfamiliar place. The biblical story became the cradle for his own experience of leaving home and going into an unknown place. The story gave him words and actions to express what he was feeling

about what was happening around him. The story made it possible for him to see God at work in his own life. The story gave him a way of responding to change with hope and thanksgiving.

I began to wonder what I could do to build such a cradle for my own children. How could I create an environment which would help them experience the Bible as a gift that comforts and challenges, stirs wonder, and opens their minds and hearts to recognizing God in their own lives?

Building the Cradle: An Ongoing Experiment

Over the past seven years, with some trial and error and plenty of guidance from wise teachers, I have learned some important lessons about cradling and nurturing the growing faith of children. The ideas I am about to describe are not my own, but my husband and I have used them in our own family and have found them helpful.

We make the Bible a very visible part of our family life.

My husband and I often read and discuss the Bible in the presence of our children. We want them to see that engaging scripture with our hearts and minds is not something limited to church or Sunday school, but an integral part of life. My husband and I are also very open about questioning, wondering, or even disagreeing with parts of scripture. We encourage our children to ask honest questions and we take

their thoughts and observations seriously. The weekly lectionary texts are a hot topic of discussion at meal times and we do our best to include the children in the conversation (a good tool is the *Lectionary Story Bible* by Ralph Milton).

Our children have their own collections of Bible stories which we read together every night before bed.² We also read short passages from the Bible itself, pointing out to the children the source of the stories they hear.

We have also built up a substantial library of story books which interpret or expand upon biblical stories (e.g., *Creation* by Gerald McDermott, *Exodus* by Brian Wildsmith) or which explore religious themes (e.g., *God's Paintbrush* and *In God's Name* by Sandy Sasso). There are also many fine books which have little or no explicitly religious content, but which beautifully capture biblical themes, such as forgiveness and reconciliation (e.g., *Chicken Sunday* by Patricia Polacco), sharing (*Four Feet, Two Sandals* by Karen Lynn Williams), self-giving (*Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfisterer), and the mystery of death and resurrection (*Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* by William Stieg). As our children get older we look forward to expanding their library to include books like *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and the *Harry Potter* series.

We surround our children with materials which encourage them to make biblical storytelling part of their play.

Our den and living room are home to boxes of wooden blocks, simple pine figures, models of the temple and other buildings, small wooden boats, and fabric pieces which look like deserts and bodies of water. Our children love to use these materials to tell stories from the Bible, sometimes with some rather odd twists, but always with care and intention. This is an early form of biblical interpretation.

They also enjoy raiding the costume box and act out their favourite stories. One Christmas I found my daughter, swathed in a blue towel, riding on the back of my son, who was wearing a donkey costume from Halloween. Fascinated, I watched as the donkey carried "Mary" around the living room and the kitchen, at last depositing her under the dining room table where she pulled a baby out from under her dress. On another occasion, friends from our church came for supper on Easter weekend and all the children staged a Passion Play in the backyard. This activity was not prompted by adults; it simply arose out of the children's own experience of the stories of Jesus' suffering and death as presented in Holy Week worship.

We have many seasonal rituals and traditions related to the church year.

Following the church year with children is a great way to help them connect with the Bible. Because it is built around key events in the life of Jesus, it provides a natural framework

for storytelling. The church year stimulates the senses: it is full of colour and symbol and music and offers rich possibilities for art and other hands-on activities (try baking pretzels during Lent or planting a miniature Easter garden). It also has the benefit of connecting celebrations at home with similar celebrations at church.

In our home, we have a seasonal table which is always draped in the colour of the liturgical season. The children help change the cloths and create decorations appropriate for each new season. During Advent, the seasonal table holds a Jesse Tree—a wooden tree with an ornament for every day of Advent. Each ornament has a symbol on it representing some ancestor of Jesus. Every night one of the children hangs the ornament for the day and someone either reads or tells the story. By the time Christmas comes we all have a deeper grasp of the larger biblical story of which the coming of Jesus is a part.

Another favourite seasonal ritual is our Epiphany party with its re-enactment of

the coming of the magi. We all dress up and take on different roles in the drama. Someone carries a glittery cardboard star suspended from a broom handle and we have a parade. During Lent, we make crosses to hang on the bare branches of a broken tree limb; on Easter Sunday the branch is transformed by eggs, butterflies made of coffee filters, and lots of tissue paper flowers and green ribbons.

We take our children to church.

We want our children to know that reading the Bible is not an end in itself.

It is part of a fuller life of following Jesus and growing in God's way—something best done in community. Our children have also been blessed in two successive congregations to have been part of a program called *Young Children and Worship*.³ This program brings young children together in an age-appropriate worship setting and presents key biblical stories and parables using plain wooden figures, fabric, and simple backdrops. After the stories are shared, the children

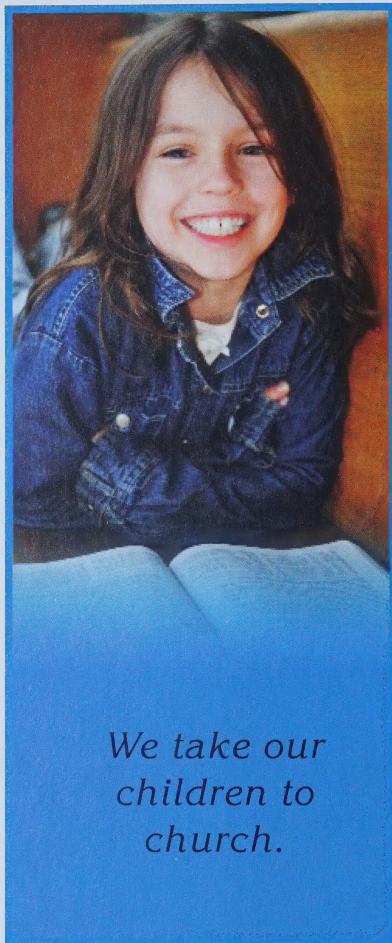
*We make the Bible
part of the family.*



wonder aloud about them as a group, then disperse to their own places to respond to the story in their own way. Some draw, some paint, others use clay, and some work with the story materials. When they are given the freedom to wonder openly and the tools to retell the stories—even without words—children discover for themselves how God can use the scriptures to meet our deepest needs.

We use biblical imagery in our daily family rituals.

My favourite example of this is the Christ candle which sits in the middle of our dining room table. Every night before supper an adult lights the candle and asks, "Why do we light the Christ candle?" The children are all eager to respond: "We light the Christ candle to help us remember that Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, is with us in every time and every place." With each repetition the truth of those words gets deeper ingrained.



*We take our
children to
church.*

Does it work? Some final thoughts

What effect is all of this having on our children? Already they have a fairly good knowledge of the Bible. Only time will tell whether they grow up with the love and reverence we are trying to instill. In the meantime, I continue to trust God and the children and the Bible to work together in mysterious ways. Every now and then I catch a glimpse of this happening.

When my son was in kindergarten, he went through a period of being very anxious. He was having trouble sleeping and developed

several nervous mannerisms. I was concerned, but could find no explanation for his anxiety. Only after observing his drawings of brown planets and sad looking animals did I slowly come to understand that he was deeply distressed about global warming and its threat to our environment. My heart ached for him, but nothing I said alleviated his

pain. One day he asked me to read him the story of Noah and the ark. He wanted to hear it again and again. He got his wooden ark off the shelf and told the story himself. I realized that when children ask for the same story over and over it is sometimes because they are using the story to work through something. This appeared to be the case with my son. One afternoon I heard him talking in the living room. He was acting out the part of Noah and had all his stuffed animals piled on the chesterfield. For more than a week he lived the Noah story. When he was ready, he stopped and his anxiety left him. I am not sure what it was about that particular story that spoke to him. Maybe taking on the role of Noah and saving so many living creatures helped him to overcome the sense of helplessness he was feeling in the face of an environmental crisis too big for his little mind to take in. Maybe it consoled him to think that new life can arise after terrible destruction. Even though I do not fully

understand how this happened, I believe that through the story of Noah, God ministered to my little boy in a time of deep need.

The final word goes to my four-year-old daughter. As I was writing this article I thought I would see what she had to say. So I asked her why she thought it was good to read the Bible. She pondered the question for a moment, then replied: "The Bible is full of Jesus and God. When we read it we get full of Jesus' and God's love."

What else is there to say except Amen!

Laura Alary earned her Ph.D. in New Testament at the University of St. Michael's College, and her M.Div. at Knox College, University of Toronto. She lives in Toronto with her children Iain, Maggie, and Miriam, and her husband, Hugh Donnelly. She recently published her first children's book, Is That Story True? which is available through The Book Room.

¹ Catherine Stonehouse, *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey: Nurturing a Life of Faith*, (Baker Academic Press, 1998).

² Not all children's Bibles are created equal. Our favourites are: *The Bible for Children* by Murray Watts (Good Books, 2002) and *The Family Story Bible* by Ralph Milton (Northstone, 1996). My six-year-old son also really likes *The Children's Illustrated Bible* by Selina Hastings (Dorling Kindersley, 1994) with its many photographs of places and objects illustrating everyday life in biblical times. Our youngest daughter is especially fond of *Psalms for Young Children* by Marie-Hélène Delval (Eerdmans, 2008).

³ This type of biblical storytelling is described in detail in the book *Young Children and Worship* by Sonja Stewart and Jerome Berryman (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press). A second volume entitled *Following Jesus* uses the same model to help older children explore what it means to be a disciple.

The Bible

Voices From Around the Church

While working on this edition of *Glad Tidings*, I thought it might be interesting to include the thoughts of others on the Bible. I sent out a simple request to numerous friends and colleagues asking them for their brief thoughts on the Bible.

I discovered that we love the Bible! Many responded, and those who didn't regretted that time or other challenges had kept them from contributing. As you read this, consider your thoughts on the Bible. How do you read it? How do you share it? What are your favourite passages? How does it affect the way you reach out to others and treat your neighbour?

The Bible is like a story book. It tells stories of how men and women lived in times when travel was perhaps by camel or walking along dirt roads or paths. There are stories of adventure, struggle, and family. We read about miracles and prophecies. We learn about the many images for God.

The Bible provides inspiration—when I need to write a meditation or just write down some thoughts, sometimes I will read a scripture passage that relates to my writing. This enables me to focus on my thoughts.

The Bible is also a guide on how we should live as Christians; it is full of wisdom, and gives us inner peace.

Finally, the Bible teaches us how to pray.

Katherine Allen is the Circulation Manager for Glad Tidings.

What does the Bible mean to me? It is like a letter written especially to me with

something new to absorb every time I read it. It is a guide book on how to live my life and how to solve many problems. It is amazing how often I can relate to a situation or emotion that one of the writers has experienced and I can learn ways to deal with it or explain it. Of course, being that the whole "Book" is the "inspired Word of God" and, as such, has such tremendous power, I should not to be surprised at its relevance!

Catherine Blatch is a wife, mother of three and grandmother of four. She has been involved in the church all her life, but was introduced to Jesus, the Saviour, through the Christian Union at university. Her hobbies are gardening and art of varying kinds, depending on the mood!

I have recently come across the Bible I was given for memorizing Bible verses when I was five years old. It is something that brought back a great number of memories of Sunday School and practising to be awarded that Bible.



My daughter asked me some time ago how I could bring to mind verses from the Bible and it all goes back to those memory verses as a child. They are verses that are permanently etched on my mind but not consciously there. They come out of my mouth when I am not even thinking about them or expecting to use them, but they are there all the same.

I know we don't stress memory work these days, but perhaps we should consider introducing it once again. The simple words of 'The Lord's My Shepherd' or 'Mary's Song' may not seem like much but if they become part of your being, they can be recalled at a time of joy or sorrow and bring comfort and a closeness to God that otherwise might not be there.

I now need my glasses to read the small print of that Bible, and I much prefer other translations to the King James Version, but its impact on my life is apparent.

Janet Brewer is involved in all levels of the WMS and is the mother of grown children.

2 Timothy 1:7 is a verse that has become part of my personal arsenal since my late teen years. At that time, I'd just started 'going out' with Donald (my husband of now 53 years) when I had a trip to North Carolina to visit a friend at Easter

break. (I went with Diana Wadsworth who was visiting her parents in Hendersonville.) I was very concerned that Donald would no longer be interested in me when I arrived home. In my morning 'quiet time' there was that verse, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind." I claimed it as my own and enjoyed the trip in peace of mind. And, as they say, "now you know the rest of the story" I have continued to use that verse in so many situations in my life, and I need it today.

Psalm 139 is another that goes deep within me as it assures me of this miracle that God who created our wonderful world by an act of love is also ABLE to care for me. I don't understand it, and never will this side of eternity, but I have come ... and am coming ... to believe it and live more and more in that certainty. Thank You, God, for the unending treasure of your Word(s) in the Bible.

June Campbell has been involved in the WMS since the 70s when she joined a nice, quiet little group that wouldn't demand too much of her while working and raising three children. Since then, she has become very active in the WMS, serving as president of her local group twice (Essa Road Presbyterian), Presbyterian twice (Barrie), and Synodical once. She is blessed with 6 grandchildren all living within Simcoe County.

I have a shelf of brand new, unused versions of the Bible—each of these Bibles was given to me at a point in my life when I thought I would need a “new Bible,” but I keep going back to the same Bible that I’ve used since I was 14. Post-it notes sticking out all over, no cover, the book of James held in with paperclips, and so many notes in some sections, it’s getting hard to read the text. My Bible is the ultimate Cole’s notes for my life. Whenever I feel like I don’t know what to do about a situation, I turn to my Bible. Sometimes the Lord leads me to a passage that makes sense right away. Other times I come away from reading it thinking, “Wow, interesting ... now, what did that have to do with my problem?”

Now that I have children, I find I’m turning to different sections in my Bible. As a teen, I read a lot of the gospel stories. Now, I’m finding inspiration in the epistles and wisdom books. My sons enjoy the exciting stories like Daniel in the lion’s den, Sampson, and Jonah and the Whale, so I find my Bible has also become a storybook. But ultimately, it’s like a love letter. I read it when I need comfort, and when I need to be calmed down. There’s always something that didn’t occur to me before; that I may not have gotten the first time I read it.

I know that as aspects of my life change, things I need or notice in the

Bible will change, but here’s the amazing thing—it’s still the same book.

Tricia Candy is currently on maternity leave from The Book Room after the birth of her second child. She is a wife, mother, dancer, gardener, and preserver.

“Just one more story, Mommy. Please!! Just one more—a little one.” This plea is part of my son, Nigel’s, regular bedtime routine. He loves stories. He loves curling up in bed and having Mommy, or Daddy, or Grandma, or Grandpa read to him. He loves to create his own stories outside of the bounds of the text on the page. He loves to fall asleep pouring over the pictures in a book. (I love that he loves books and I want to foster a love of reading as he grows.)

Each night, Nigel goes to his bookcase and chooses which book we will read. He tries to pick the biggest book—the longest story. Some nights, he will choose his story Bible, wanting me to read him the whole book. We talk about how it is a book filled with lots of different stories and we choose two stories to read. Carefully, we look through the Bible to find just two. He will ask for the story about the children, or the story with the horses (Elijah being taken up to heaven in the chariot.), or one of many other stories that he has discovered. Each night, he will ask for just one more, knowing that he



has a whole library right there in his hands waiting to be explored.

Somehow, on the nights that he chooses his story Bible, he is able to hear just one more story, and another story. Somehow it is not difficult to get Mommy to ready many stories. There is something powerful about having Nigel ask to hear these stories. There is something wonderful about sharing the stories of faith with him.

The Rev. Laura Duggan is Associate Minister at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Newmarket and a mother of three young children.

Life with three small children under the age of three is exhausting. Looking after so many daily and immediate needs, sometimes meant that time for myself was difficult to find. One day, when I was able to squeeze in my devotion during a nap time, I read from Psalm 42, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God." I had sung those words for years, but they felt more true to me on that day than they ever had before. God's word was like water for my tired soul and body. I literally drank up what the psalmist had to offer that day and the words were a healing balm.

Theresa McDonald-Lee is the Director of Camp Kintail and loves playing with her daughters, Ella, Lucy, and Anna.

The Bible is a sweeping collection of stories that are, paradoxically, one story. Together, they are the story of hope. I read the stories of the Bible with my children to teach

them about the world, and I seem to spend my life considering and reconsidering everything I have read. These are the stories that shape my living, touch, inspire, terrify, edify, and rearrange me. There is so much to find in the Bible, and I often find what I haven't yet sought, but what is most essential. This is living text.

Katie Munnik is the writer of The Messy Table (www.presbyterianrecord.ca). She works at St. Columba's Church of Scotland in London, England, where currently she lives with her husband and two children.

I think often about Paul McLean and his work in translating the scriptures into the language of the Hakka people. I am blessed to be able to read the Bible in my own language. I can read in Psalm 46 my mantra—Be still and know that I am God. In fact, because I read it, I chose it as a companion piece. Over and over again, I read my Old Testament passage:

"Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing: now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." Isaiah 43:18

In those wilderness times, I find my Isaiah passage and read it. Because English is my first language, I have access to a whole variety of translations of the Bible in English. So, I can be inspired by the wording of the New Revised Standard Version, or get a simpler explanation from the Good News version, or be hit by the realistic language of Eugene Peterson's, *The Message*.

I do enjoy and am often inspired by hearing the scriptures read, but it is such a privilege to hold the Word of God in my hands and read the printed page, ponder it word by word, phrase by phrase, where it then dwells more deeply in my thinking and thus in my life.

Lynda Reid, a longtime Regional Staff, still enjoys being surprised by the mysteries and relevance of the Bible.

Sometimes life throws lemons at us and we don't always have sugar to sweeten them. We complain bitterly to God. Just like Job, a good and righteous man, whose servants were slaughtered, his sheep burned up by fire, and his house destroyed by a mighty wind that killed his sons and daughters. That was only the beginning.

Job cursed his life, but his faith in God was unwavering. Habakkuk's faith too was strong but his country was filled with evil, injustice, and violence. Habakkuk complained to God. Why didn't God intervene? Why didn't God even answer his cry for help? When God did answer it was to warn of greater savagery on Habakkuk's country, Judah. So Habakkuk complained again.

Habakkuk waited: God would ultimately destroy the destroyers. Evil would not win out. And secondly, God is not silent forever. "The righteous shall live by his faith." (Habakkuk 2:4)

I was unfamiliar with the Book of Habakkuk until I went to Ethiopia at

the height of the great famine in 1985. That once powerful country was brought low. The priests of the Orthodox Church were starving. They couldn't provide food for their people. Yet, with humility and joy they quoted from Habakkuk that although the fields produce no food, although there are no sheep in the pen, yet they rejoiced in the Lord. (Habakkuk 3:17-18)

Read Habakkuk for yourself and you will understand the great gift of faith I received from them.

June Stevenson was editor of Glad Tidings from 1980 to 2004.

The Bible has always been part of my life, from the time I was very young. When I was seven years old, I received, from my parents, my first Bible for Christmas. How I treasured "my Bible." I still have it, although it is rather war torn as my older brother decided to cut the cover in a couple of places. He was probably getting back at me for something I had done to him. I still remember being quite upset. He also got a Bible for Christmas that year, but his remained in excellent condition.

In our large family Bible is inserted all the special clippings and cards, along with the cuttings of hair from my two young sisters who died. We often took out the family Bible and looked at all these family treasures. It seemed appropriate that these were in the book that we believed was an important part of our lives. We would often read some passages together at

that time. Mother, even with dementia, often slipped articles between the pages of the family Bible. Just recently I found a Swiss Chalet gift card—guess she didn't want to lose it.

I remember when I was designated in 1969 as an overseas missionary to Taiwan, appointed by the Women's Missionary Society (WD), I was presented with an engraved KJV Bible to take to Taiwan with me. Because of the tropical climate, it grew mold on the leather cover. My colleagues and I would often chuckle about having to shave our leather Bibles before reading.

In my adult years, I regularly read the Bible as I believe it is my guide to life and my guide to prayer.

Wilma Welsh, Moderator of the 132nd General Assembly, served as a missionary to Taiwan for six years, and worked in the national offices for over 35 years. Wilma retired in 2002 and continues to lead an "active retirement" believing that her calling did not end when she retired.

I have quite a few favourite Biblical passages. One of them is, "But I did not do so, because of the fear of God," or in my own words, "I acted differently because I honoured God" from Nehemiah 5:15.

I was standing in the car port of the manse the other night preparing to go inside and put some thought down on paper about next Sunday's message. One of the school kids "came by" yelling, "Hi Rev!" I was tired; it had

been a hot, quite stressful, twelve-hour-day. I turned away from the boy with a brief wave. Nehemiah's words echoed in my mind and I completed the turn. I walked over and sat down beside him. I listened. We talked. I listened some more and finally was able to act with some purpose.

Nehemiah was a politician. He was the governor of Jerusalem some five hundred years before Jesus. He noticed all the other politicians lined their pockets by claiming every single last cent of the expenses they were entitled to. But in his book he wrote, "I acted differently because I honoured God." Instead he set to work on a plan to relieve the misery of the city's poorest people. Isn't it strange how some of those ancient Bible stories seem like they could have been written just last night?

How do you in your community, and me in mine, honour God by standing out in a crowd? How do you do it if you are a politician in Ottawa; face down on the ice while playing your favourite sport; standing in the car port of a manse in Marli, St. Patrick's, Grenada? We can only do it person by person, action by action, wherever we are. After all, that is how God changes the world.

Rev. Jim Young serves with his wife Ann in Grenada. They minister to Belair Presbyterian Church and Mac Donald College of the Presbyterian Church in Grenada.





Is there something “SPECIAL” about being human

or are we just another animal on the Canadian tundra?

By Margaret Somerville

Pick up the newspaper, watch the TV, or listen to the radio any morning and these will be some of the stories you are likely to hear: euthanasia, reproductive technology, shortage of physicians, medical mistakes, scarce healthcare resources, an ageing population, new ‘miracle’ medical technologies, vaccination against a feared virus, HIV/AIDS, organ transplants, and so on. These stories have a medical scientific theme that runs through them all. But they also have another commonality: they all raise important ethical issues, sometimes unprecedented ones. That means they place us in situations that involve deciding on the values that should govern

these situations and, often, conflict about what those values should be.

Moreover, which values ultimately prevail will help to determine what our collective values as a society will be. Whereas, in the past we largely found our shared values in the context of participating in a religion, in a secular society we find many of them within the context of medicine and science. The reasons include that we all personally relate to medicine and science; what happens in those contexts matters to us personally and to those we love—it affects our lives for good or ill, so we care about which values prevail in them. And new developments in medicine

and science are raising unprecedented ethical issues, issues no other humans before us have ever had to face. It matters that we all have some understanding of these issues if we are to make wise decisions about the values that should govern them.

But I am not going to deal with those issues, expressly, in this short article, although I hope we can discuss some of them at the Women's Gathering conference. Rather, I want to focus on a question, the answer to which I believe, affects all of them. Here's that question: Is there something *special* about being human?

Recently, an editor asked me what I believed was presently the world's most dangerous idea. I replied, "The idea that there is nothing *special* about being human and, therefore, humans do not deserve *special respect*, as compared with other animals or even robots." This response might seem anodyne and a "cop out," but I'd like to try to convince you otherwise.

Whether humans are *special*—sometimes referred to as human exceptionalism or uniqueness—and, therefore, deserve *special respect* is a controversial and central question in bioethics and, I believe, how we answer it will affect how we answer all the other difficult ethical questions the new technology raises and will have a major impact on many important ethical issues.

Although I will frame this discussion in a very limited context of whether humans merit greater respect than animals and robots, it should be kept

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in mind that not seeing human beings and human life as deserving *special respect* would have very broad and serious impact far outside this context. It could affect matters that range from respect for human rights, to justifications for armed conflict, how we treat prisoners, how we run our healthcare and aged persons' care systems, the ethical and legal tones of our societies, and so on.

Although all living beings deserve respect, which certainly excludes cruelty to animals, traditionally, humans have been given special respect, which brings with it special protections, especially of life. In practice, we have implemented this special respect through the idea of personhood, which embodies two concepts: all humans are persons and no animals are persons. But the concept of "universal human personhood"—the idea that all humans deserve *special respect* simply because they are human—and excluding animals from personhood are both being challenged.

Some philosophers are arguing that at least certain animals should be regarded

as persons in order to give them the same rights and protections as humans. Alternatively, they argue that humans should be regarded as just another animal, which results in the same outcome, a loss of special respect for human beings.

Princeton philosopher, Peter Singer, takes this latter approach. He believes that distinguishing humans from other animals and, as a result, treating animals differently, is a form of wrongful discrimination he calls “speciesism.” In short, he rejects the claim that humans are special and, therefore, deserve special respect.

Rather, he believes the respect owed to a living being should depend only on avoiding suffering to it, not on whether or not the being is human. That means that what we do not do to humans in order not to inflict suffering on them, we should not do to animals; and what we do to animals to relieve their suffering and regard as ethical, we should also do for humans. Consequently, we don’t eat humans; therefore, we shouldn’t eat animals. We allow euthanasia for animals; therefore, we should, likewise, allow it for humans.

To such philosophers, the attribution of personhood should not depend, yet

again, on being human, but on having certain characteristics or capacities to function in certain ways—for example, being self aware—having a sense of one’s history and, perhaps, of a future; and possessing a capacity to relate to others.

Following logically on that, these philosophers then argue that some seriously mentally disabled humans and babies, who are among the most vulnerable, weakest, and most in-need members of our societies, are not persons, and, therefore, do not have the protections personhood brings, for instance, protection of their right to life. And, likewise, they propose that at least some animals should be regarded as non-human persons on the basis that these animals have some of the characteristics of personhood that the humans they regard as non-persons lack. They propose that animals which are self-conscious, intelligent, and have free will and emotions comparable to those of humans, should be treated as non-human persons.

But this idea that simply being human does not mean one deserves special respect, rather, the respect owed to a “being” depends on its having certain attributes, is not only a serious danger to vulnerable humans. It could also lead to situations in which robots would be seen to deserve greater respect than humans, and ethical restrictions on what we may do to change human life would become inoperative.

People who believe the kind and degree of respect owed to an entity

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depends on its intelligence, would argue that some super-intelligent robots will deserve more respect than humans. They define intelligence narrowly, as logical, cognitive mentation and, for them, these robots are more “intelligent” than any humans. This approach has far-reaching and serious implications, well beyond the degree of respect that should be shown to an individual human, as compared with an individual robot.

If there is nothing special about being human, there is no essence of our humanness that we must hold in trust for future generations. That means we are free to use the new technoscience, as the transhumanists advocate we should, to alter humans so that they become “post-human,” that is, not human at all as we know it. In other words, there would be many less or perhaps no ethical barriers to seeking the transhumanists’ utopian goal, that humans will become an obsolete model. This would be achieved through our redesigning ourselves using technoscience—or perhaps robots doing so. Instead of our designing them, they could redesign us!

We used to regard humans as special on the basis that they had a soul, a divine spark, and animals did not. But, today, far from everyone accepts the concept of a soul. Most people, however, at least act as though we humans have a “human spirit,” a metaphysical, although not necessarily supernatural, element, as part of the essence of our humanness. Some philosophers see the ethical and

moral sense humans have as distinguishing humans from animals, which also have consciousness. They believe humans are *special* because of this moral sense and, therefore, deserve *special respect*.

I’m an incurable optimist and I believe that open-minded persons of goodwill, whatever their beliefs, will conclude that humans deserve special respect in the sense that there are some things we should not do to humans, even if we might do them to animals or robots, although what we currently do to animals needs very careful ethical consideration.

Implementing and maintaining *special respect* for humans will require that we recognize humans as having innate human dignity that must be respected, and that we regard as unethical interventions that contravene that dignity, such as designing our children, making a baby from two same-sex people, creating human-animal hybrids, cloning humans, using human embryos as a “manufacturing plant” to produce therapeutic agents, euthanasia, and, with the new neuroscience, perhaps most worrying of all, designing, controlling or intervening on our minds.

It’s true that we need to have greater respect for all life, not just human life. But implementing that respect should not be by way of denigrating respect for humans and human life, which equating humans to animals and to robots does. We are not just another animal in the forest or another robot in the laboratory and promoting

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Postscript: After writing this article, I was curious to know what some of my friends and colleagues would consider to be the world's most dangerous idea at present. When I asked them, a large majority answered, without hesitation—religion. That caused me to ponder how their choice correlated with my choice.

Whatever they believe, the adherents of militant fundamentalist religions, or any other militant fundamentalism,

certainly do not act according to a principle that all humans deserve *special respect*. Like the secularists, they also categorize people, in their case, as believers or infidels and believe that only the former deserve respect. To the extent that my colleagues see religion as a root cause of this lack of respect for some people and view that as a serious harm, my most dangerous idea and theirs are concordant. But, over millennia, most religions have been the main institutions carrying and passing on to future generations the idea that humans are *special* and deserve *special respect*. So, from that perspective, our most dangerous ideas are in direct conflict.

This “dual use” potential sounds an important warning. As with all ideas, even the idea that humans are *special*, or the practice of religion, can be used not only for good, but also for harm. We need to be aware, always, that we must seek to maximize the former and to minimize the latter.

National Presbyterian Women's Gathering Look In—Shout Out

We are excited by the number of women who have already registered and also the variety of the registrants. Women of all ages, from all across the country are coming. As well, we will be hosting a number of international and ecumenical guests.

Don't miss out on this fabulous opportunity to learn, share, pray, laugh, and sing together just because the early bird registration has passed. Come and celebrate our common beliefs and discuss our differences. Engage in Bible study and participate in excellent workshops. Expand your awareness of global issues and explore issues of mission and justice in your own life and the life of the church. Most of all, rejoice in the knowledge that where we gather, God is present.

Visit www.womensgathering.ca for more details or to download a registration form.

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- ◆ Income where there was shortage

PWS&D supports the Jumla clinic in remote, rural Nepal, providing essential health services and improving nutrition for malnourished children. In an area where TB and leprosy continue to impact families, the clinic is providing medical care, teaching improved health practices, establishing self-help groups and advancing agricultural work to finally ease the burden of poverty.



At nine months old, little Baiwara weighed under eight pounds when his mother brought him to the clinic. Thanks to the nutritional support and healthcare he received, Baiwara is now a strong, healthy baby and his mother has learned how to protect him from malnourishment and disease.



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What's a Woman Worth?

by Barb Summers, PWS&D
Communications Coordinator



I'm from a farming family of seven in a small, rural Ontario town called Kirkfield. With a population of about 200 people, we used to say Kirkfield consisted of our family and few others. Our big (albeit tenuous) claims to fame are the liftlocks on the Trent-Severn Waterway and the old Sir William Mackenzie mansion that's rumoured to be haunted.

To be honest, growing up was less about the village and more about the farm. I was raised on a large family farm where the majority of my summer vacations were spent picking corn. My proudest memories involve the day my horse finally couldn't buck me off, and a social outing was skating on the pond with my sisters.

Many people find it amusing that my dad, a farmer, was stuck with five daughters. They joke that not having any boys meant he must have been deprived of manual labour. Usually it is just that: a joke. My experience was nothing of the sort. I grew up not just thinking, but *knowing*, I could do anything a boy could do. My sisters and I used to say we could do it better (and quite often we did!). Whether it be working on the farm, learning new skills or excelling in school, the options for me were limitless.

We worked hard as kids, bringing in hay, helping at harvest, driving tractors, herding cattle ... whatever was needed. My mom and dad never once said, "Oh, that's man's work," or,

"Now Barbie, don't try to do that because you're just a girl." They encouraged me to excel and take on challenges—on the farm, in my studies, in goal-setting, in life. As a result, I grew up believing I could follow any career path I desired—I could be a surgeon, a lawyer, a veterinarian, or a farmer. I believed to my very core that women were just as equal to men and any attitude to the contrary was simply not tolerated. Women deserved the same dignities, respect, and opportunities. It didn't exist in my world that women couldn't do something simply because of their sex, and my sense of value and self-worth had nothing to do with my gender.

Now, after over three years working with Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D), I recognize how blessed I truly am. What we may think of as blessings—things such as financial security, abundant food, passing an exam, or the arrival of a new baby—are not the only kinds of blessings we receive. I realize that sometimes blessings take the form of attitudes and opinions we are fortunate enough to live surrounded with.

Sadly, this isn't the case for millions of women around the world.

Having recently returned from a trip to Nicaragua and Guatemala, accompanied by our Moderator, the Rev. Dr. Herb Gale and his wife the Rev. Dr. Shirley Gale, I'm once again reminded of what a blessing it is to grow up in a country where the law affirms, and society generally upholds, that women have equal rights and equal opportunity and

gender discrimination isn't accepted or tolerated. We are privileged to have mechanisms in place that protect victims and justice is sought for wrongdoing.

As the Communications Coordinator for PWS&D, I've taken part in some amazing visits to see the work of our partners in Africa, Asia, and Central America. Every visit is memorable and life-changing, yet specific experiences certainly stand out as highlights. On this most recent trip, I found myself at the *Casa de las Niñas*, a shelter for young girls who live in the busy, and often dangerous, urban markets of Managua, Nicaragua. The program is operated through our local partner, INPRHU—the Institute for Human Promotion. Together, we are supporting children who are forced to work in the streets and markets in order to survive. These kids are often exposed to physical and sexual exploitation and abuse. Our program is providing these vulnerable kids with educational opportunities and support in order to learn and grow into healthy adults. Through social, cultural, sporting, and technical activities, kids are building their self-esteem, developing skills, and learning about their rights. It was exciting to see the faces of the kids and listen as they described their dreams for the future and the positive changes happening in their lives.

I was particularly touched by the stories of the girls we are supporting at the *Casa*. Most of these girls have been victims of sexual abuse, referred to the shelter by INPRHU's community outreach workers and the national police.

Working hand-in-hand with dedicated, supportive psychologists for counselling sessions, the girls also participate in activities, such as crafts, painting, and dance. They learn how to overcome enormous trauma and challenges in order to live with freedom, dignity, and brighter days. During this journey toward self-confidence, girls may stay at the shelter for up to three months at a time. It is a place that teems with compassion, acceptance, strength, and love. The program focuses on overcoming violence, oppression, abandonment, and abuse. As the coordinator of the *Casa*, Maria Isabel, explained, "We believe that people are capable and given the opportunity, they can change their own future and prospects."



In a society where attitudes toward women are often palpably negative and oppressive, I was encouraged by the hope I found at the *Casa* for girls, who have been dragged into the dark shadow of their culture. As I looked around at the giggling, bashful girls sitting in a circle around me to tell their stories, I saw bright futures filled with dreams and adventures, not the pains from past experiences. I saw girls learning that they deserve the same respect and opportunities as all people. I saw life, energy, and hope.

Angela, a beautiful girl of 18 who came to the shelter after a vicious attack by a family friend and neighbour, told me that at the *Casa* she's learned how to communicate and trust other people again while also avoiding dangerous situations. The girl sitting next to her, Gabriella, came to the *Casa* after several suicide attempts to escape the trauma of being abducted by an older boy at school. She twirled a strand of her long dark hair, nodding in agreement with Angela and added, "I've learned that I can set goals and I can achieve those goals."

At the *Casa*, healing begins.

It's a well-documented fact that investing in women is good for the whole family and entire community. Maternal and child health are particularly important indicators of broader societal progress. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has said there is real need

to make women's empowerment a foreign-policy priority. She stated at the International Conference on Population and Development that "we have seen that when women and girls have the tools to stay healthy and the opportunity to contribute to their families' well-being, they flourish and so do the people around them." (January 8)

I believe that, as a whole, our global community is gradually becoming a better place for women, and the change isn't necessarily prompted by the Hillary Clinton's of the world. A recent article in the New York Times magazine states that, "There's no question that women around the world enjoy opportunities that simply didn't exist a few decades ago. Yet the women exerting the greatest pressure for change often aren't the presidents and tycoons but those toiling further down the pyramid, driven by a passion to create a better world. And in particular, a better world for women." (Nicholas Kristof, 2010) These change-makers are women like Angela and Gabriella. They are our program partners at INPRHU working tirelessly as they protect and defend vulnerable girls in their community. They are the Canadian women and men, who continue to support, believe in, and speak out about this important work.



Having witnessed the work of PWS&D's partnerships in Nicaragua and around the world, I honestly believe that Presbyterians in Canada are taking part in building a better world for women. Whether it be the emotional support to recover from abuse and violence offered at the *Casa de las Niñas*, or empowering women through a variety of programs in human rights, income generation, and community development strategies, we are helping women seize new opportunities for themselves and their families.

Ingrid, a 16-year-old girl at the *Casa*, explains the success of this work best, "I've learned that I'm worth something."

Barb Summers is the Communications Coordinator for Presbyterian World Service & Development.

Book Reviews

Choosing a Bible

I expect that many of you have a Bible that you love. For some, it might be old and tattered, filled with notes and highlights. For others, it might be a Bible you received at a special time in your life. For me, I don't have a favourite, but I turn to different Bibles at different times.

If you are considering a new Bible, or considering giving a Bible as a gift, consider the following:

The Translation

A good Bible translation is one that is translated from the Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. Although a paraphrase, or storybook Bible, is fine for younger children or as a supplementary Bible, I would not suggest it as your only Bible! Generally, I suggest that it is nice to have at least two translations so that you can compare and contrast passages.

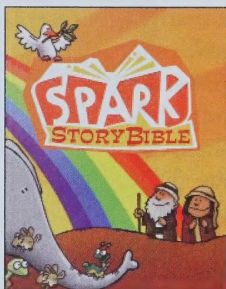
Also, consider the grade level that the Bible was written at, particularly if you are buying the Bible as a gift. For example, the NRSV is written at a Grade 11 level, but The Message is written at 4–5 level. A quick search online will provide this information, though even reading a few verses will help you to see how easy or challenging it is to read.

The Format

Think about what you will be using your Bible for. Will you be carrying it around or will it just sit on your bedside table? Do you want a study Bible that adds commentary, or will you use it alongside a devotional book or commentary? If this Bible is for a child, are the pictures age-appropriate? (I always check for a crucifixion picture to decide if the pictures are appropriate for the age of the child, who will be reading the Bible.)

Spark Story Bible, Augsburg Fortress

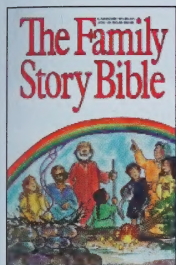
I love this Bible and so does my four-year-old son. The pictures are lovely and vivid and it has a good variety of Old and New Testament stories. It is a nice read-a-loud Bible storybook and I would consider it a great gift for



children ages 4–8. I know of at least one Sunday School that uses this as their Bible for the children.

The Family Story Bible, Northstone Publishing

This is a very popular Bible among the families I know. I love the introduction



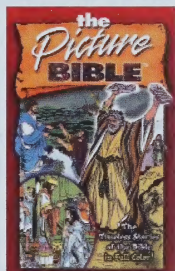
to this Bible, "Reading the Bible is like participating in amateur sport. If you're not having fun, you're not doing it right."

The introduction does give my only word of caution about

this Bible, "Where the terse Biblical text offers little detail, I invent them. Where names are missing, I invent them." I do find that the author, Ralph Milton, does offer his own imagination to the stories. This can make the stories come alive, but it can also disturb some readers as to the accuracy of this Bible. However, it is a paraphrase or Bible story book, not a direct translation, so for many it is not a problem and many like its inclusive language and gender balance.

The Picture Bible, David C. Cook

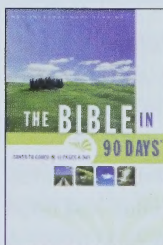
This is a Bible done as a graphic novel (think cartoon). It is good for getting a child, aged 8–12, excited about the Bible. It also contains some minimal commentary—some that I liked and some that I didn't, but overall this is a good 'starter' Bible for a child who is starting to read on their own.



NIV Adventure Bible, Zonderkidz

If you are looking for a full Bible for a child, this one is great! I would suggest it for ages 8 and up, though the

NIV is at a Grade 7 reading level. It is the full NIV translation of the Bible, along with some short commentary. It has some pictures, but not so many as to make the child feel like it is a 'little kid's' Bible. This would be a great Bible for a young person heading off to camp.



The Bible in 90 Days, Zondervan

I kind of like this Bible because it encourages the reader to read the Bible, "cover to cover in 12 pages a day." Although I think reading through the Bible is not the only, or even the best way to read the Bible, I do think we should all embark on doing it once.

And, once you have done that, you can use this as your regular Bible. The 'markers' are subtle so this can easily become a general use Bible when you have read through the Bible in 90 days!

NIV Giant Print Compact Bible

And for those whose eyesite is not what it used to be, consider a large print edition. I like this one because although the print is large, the Bible is still compact.

The Book Room has other large print editions available, so feel free to contact them for more information on this, or any of the Bibles reviewed!

Mission in Action

Murray Garvin
YuShan Theological College
Tawian

We are now well into our Fall term here at Yu Shan, and it is high time I get a letter off to you.

First, a recap of the Summer: I flew to Vancouver on June 18 and had a very good week with Bob and Carol and was then on to Toronto on June 24. Akas, the student who spent the summer with me, arrived from Taiwan 20 minutes after I got in.

We then had a very busy Summer. The Life and Mission Agency had lined up nine churches where we did mission education in Ontario, sharing the work of Yu Shan and the aboriginal church in Taiwan. We also did a presentation at Camp Cairn and at the VBS at St. David's Church, Vankoughnet, where I usually worship when I am not somewhere else. One of the churches was in Niagara Falls, so we were able to see the falls, and one was in Brantford, allowing us to attend The Six Nations Champion of Champions Pow Wow. Akas preached very well in each of the churches and often sang or did the children's time. Akas spent four days in Knox College residence and got a good introduction to the college and to Toronto. And we, of course, visited the offices of the PCC. We also got to several museums,

and enjoyed a Randy Travis concert. So it was a very busy time.

In addition, we had many good visits with my family members in Ontario. They are all doing well.

We spent the first ten days of September in British Columbia while we enjoyed a five-day, five-church visit to the Cariboo Church with David and Linda Webber. It was a wonderful experience! The fellowship in these house churches is splendid, and we enjoyed meeting many of their members. Again, Akas preached in all of them. He also got to canoe across Lac la Hache with David, see an eagle's nest (and get some feathers), and become a real cowboy on a ranch, riding for over an hour, before enjoying a western meal and worship at the nearby house church. I think he enjoyed it very much.

Before leaving Vancouver, we visited the Vancouver School of Theology, and also I-bi and May, and their children Savi and Leah. I-bi is finishing his Master of Theology in Homiletics and will start a Ph.D. course in the new year. It is always good to see them.

We returned to Taiwan on Sept. 11 and it is good to be "home" again. I was soon into preparations for this year's classes—this year, I only have three. I have decided not to continue teaching Theological English, as my Theological Chinese is just not good enough. Also,

due to a schedule conflict, no students registered for my English Drama class. However, I am enjoying very much the three classes I have. It is great to have several students in first-year Theology whom I taught in their undergraduate class, and to see how they have matured as persons, especially spiritually, over the years.

Now we are well into the term—mid-terms in four weeks. The time goes so fast, but some things are slow. We are still waiting on the building permit for our new chapel. It seems it is hung up over some problems with procedures in the construction of earlier buildings. We hope they will get it all settled soon.

In the meantime, all is going along nicely and I am enjoying my seventh year back here. You may remember my mentioning “Aunt Mabel” Black, an American volunteer missionary, who taught English here for seven years, including two while we were here the first time (1974 to 1976). She has been my model! And I am now matching her record of seven years! Maybe, by the grace of God and the will of the school, I may beat her!

I trust all is going well with you, and that you too are having a good year.

Yours in Christ, Murray

Brian Johnston
Protestant Theological Seminary
Romania

I am happy to report that my work in Romania as English teacher, choir

director, and photographer is continuing to go well.

I continue to encourage theological students to enhance their various mission projects through photography, whenever possible. I also endeavour to combine photography with other art forms. I frequently use Hungarian and Romania folk music and have often performed the Canadian Huron Carol as part of an exhibition opening. Just before Christmas, I was honoured that Tokes Attila published one of my old pre-digital photos accompanying a very famous poem entitled “Christmas” by the Hungarian poet, Ady Endre.

It pleases me to report that I have good connections with the Canadian embassy in Bucharest. The ambassador visited our institute in April and showed great interest in the religious minorities within the Hungarian community. For the July 1 celebrations, I was asked to provide a suitable photo of Romania to be paired with one of their Canadian photos. Each guest received the collaboration as part of their program information.

More and more Canadians are supporting my work through Something Extra. One person who has benefitted is Benjamin, a very talented young pianist. He was abandoned early in life by both parents and has survived extremely difficult circumstances. A very patient teacher and financial assistance from Canada allowed him to continue his worthwhile studies and at 18 he has already played with two professional orchestras.

Overseas Staff Birthdays



January

- 5 - Aron Csaba Pandy-Szekeres, Hungary
- 6 - Anna Szabo Pandy-Szekeres, Hungary
- 10 - David Pandy-Szekeres, Hungary
- 11 - Nico William Hoekstra, Malawi
- 16 - Michelle Verwey, India

February

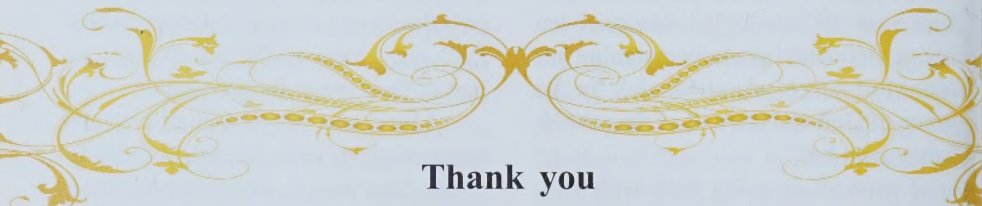
- 19 - Jae Lee, South Korea
- 21 - Bill McKelvie, Pakistan

Providing opportunities for sharing cultures and languages is one of the most rewarding parts of my job. At the conclusion of our Advent Concert in December, we were able to sing Silent Night in four languages. Recently, a

youth group and two pastors from a Korean church in Toronto took part in a service in a village congregation and surprised the people by singing How Great Thou Art not only in English and Korean, but also in Hungarian.

This past weekend, the Rev. Patricia Shaver from London, Ontario, preached in another village congregation in Romania and made a moving video presentation portraying her recent experiences in Malawi. Arpi, the pastor, and his relatively small congregation have decided to do some fundraising to support the ongoing relief work being done in Malawi.

I continue to say thanks to all the Canadian Presbyterians who are making a real difference in all the various projects throughout the world that the PCC is involved in.



Thank you

If you receive the audio edition of *Glad Tidings*, you will know that we recently changed from cassette tape to CD. You may also have noticed that we have changed voices. We have decided to do the recording in our office, while we learn the new technology.

So, it seemed appropriate to offer a 'thank you' to our previous readers for their many years of hard work. A big 'thank you' goes out to **Jean Rankine** and **Lorna Tear**. For years, they worked to provide an audio version of *Glad Tidings* to those who are visually impaired. Thank you for contributing to this important ministry!

In Memoriam

Mary Nichol was born in Smiths Falls on March 28, 1922 and received her elementary and secondary education there. She studied for three years at the Toronto Bible College before training to be a nurse at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie, Ontario. After graduating she worked as an obstetrical and surgical supervisor in the Smiths Falls Public Hospital.

Mary was accepted by the Women's Missionary Society to serve in India in 1947. At that time she made a private covenant with her Lord. If He willed, she would serve Jesus Christ as a missionary for 40 years. After two years of language study, she was appointed to work as the district nurse in the Bhil country. Later, she joined the staff of the Jobat Christian Hospital.

Under her guidance, the school was brought to a high standard of excellence, attracting students not only from the Bhil district, but also from other areas of India. She served the Bhil area for 24 years. During her furlough in 1961–62, Mary studied at the University of Western Ontario and obtained her Bachelor of Nursing Science. In 1972, Mary was appointed by the World Health Organization as Nurse Consultant in Maternal and Child Care. Mary joined the staff of the Board of World Mission in August 1975, and began her years of service with the United Mission to Nepal. Mary spent an intensive year in 1981–1982 studying to receive her Master's degree in Public Health at the Hebrew University Hadassah Medical School in Jerusalem. Her 40 years of being a missionary for Jesus Christ were fulfilled in the Fall of 1987.

After retiring, Mary lived in Smiths Falls and attended Westminster Presbyterian Church where she led the Explorers' Group for children. Mary was also involved in the Women's Missionary Society. Mary passed away on September 7, 2010. Donations to the School of Nursing in Jobat, India, which Mary initiated, are appreciated. Her funeral was largely attended by family and friends.



Photo: Presbyterian Church Archives, #G-4300-FC

In the Society

SYNOD

The **Quebec & Eastern Ontario Synodical** met for their Fall Rally on October 20 in Renfrew, ON. The theme was Missions: North & South. After registration, the day opened with a hymn sing. The Rev. Allison Sharpe warmly welcomed participants and Mary Lynn McConnachie gave a brief history of the church.

Synodical President, Joan Hilliard, led the prayer to constitute the meeting, followed by the WMS purpose. Ruth Davidson, Vice-President, led the devotions based on Romans 8:28.

Mary-Lynn read the minutes of the 2009 Fall Rally. Treasurer, Henny Donkersteeg, and the Literature Lady, Catherine Blatch gave reports. Joan Hilliard introduced the guest speaker, Joan Smith, National President of the WMS. Joan showed pictures of her exposure tour to the Cariboo region of British Columbia. Joan and the group visited seven house churches over a 1300 km distance. Attendance varied, but music was always a very important part of the ministry. Lottie Sutherland, Lanark & Renfrew President, thanked Joan Smith for her informative talk.

After lunch, we sang Who's goin' to tell the story? to begin our afternoon session. Joan Smith gave an update on the National Presbyterian Women's Gathering which takes place in May 2011. Catherine Blatch relayed the

story of Maggie, a Chinese Christian. Since Christians are persecuted in China, prayers were offered for Maggie and her Christian friends' safety. Margaret Reynolds thanked the people who had brought or done knitting to add to the 103 boxes of knit goods already sent overseas.

She then introduced Denise Van Wissen, who has worked as a nutritionist in Nicaragua and Guatemala for the past 13 years. Denise's husband, and two little boys, were also present. Denise shared an interesting visual presentation and expressed her gratitude



to the WMS for its ongoing support. Synodical Past-President, Lois Klempa, thanked Denise and announced that the annual meeting would take place in April in Montreal.

Grace Thornley-Brown extended courtesies and Christine Ball spoke on

Transformation before the benediction was said and the hymn, Lord of light, whose name and splendor, was sung.

-Vivian Young

PRESBYTERIAL

Friends of the Orphans was the theme for the **Maitland Presbyterian** meeting held at the South Kinloss Presbyterian Church on September 27. We began with a fun time of fellowship and delicious desserts served by the South Kinloss women.

President Joanne Lennips constituted the meeting with prayer and welcomed everyone. The Molesworth group led the worship time with the message taken from 1 Corinthians 13.

Hannah Dickie gave a very well prepared presentation from her camp experience at Camp Kintail. She thanked the group for sponsoring her. She had an exciting time. Another talented young woman, Michelle Cunningham, entertained us with two beautifully played guitar solos.

Our guest speaker, Deanne Dickson, from Belmore, shared about her mission trip to the Dominican Republic where she helped at a local orphanage. Erlma Haldenby announced the upcoming women's conference to be held in Richmond Hill, May 20-23, 2011, entitled Look In—Shout Out.

-Valerie Sharpe

Atwood Presbyterian Church hosted the Fall Rally of **Huron Perth Presbyterian**. The theme of the rally was Learning and Living Together in Mission.

Jan MacInnes led the Call to Worship and the WMS purpose was repeated in unison, followed by the singing of the hymn, For the fruits of all creation.

President Lois Horne gave the opening prayer. The Rev. Catherine Campbell and Ina McMillanon welcomed the group. The guest speakers, the Rev. Wallace and Audrey Little spoke and shared photos of their many trips to the mission field. Following group discussion, Eunice Bissett of Goderich expressed appreciation to the Littles and presented a gift.

Ruth Hart, the literature secretary, presented an outline of several books she had on display on the book table and encouraged all to choose some good reading. At lunch time, Margaret French of Mitchell said grace and all enjoyed a bag lunch and a fruit plate and beverages.

The afternoon session began with devotions by the St. Mary's ladies and Scripture readings by Willie Drost. Barb Tubb entertained us with many experiences she had as a WMS member. The afternoon guest speakers, Violet and Chris Ropp of Brunner and Miriam and Russel Gingrich of Dorking, illustrated the art of cutting milk bags into strips in order to crochet them into sleeping mats to be sent overseas. This was followed by the roll call, the offering, and various reports.

We concluded by singing the hymn, We've a story to tell to the nations, and Ruth Dewar led the closing prayer.

Niagara Presbyterial met for their Fall Rally at Scottlea Presbyterian Church, St. Catharines, on September 22.

A potluck lunch was enjoyed by the 45 members and guests in attendance, and the Rev. Martin Wehrmann, minister of the congregation, welcomed everyone.

The afternoon meeting commenced with a worship service conducted by Gail Opie and Irene Ellis of the Drummond Hill/ Stamford/ Chippawa group. This service took the form of a celebration for the Myossio group from Knox Church, St. Catharines, which will be disbanded by the end of this year after 68 years as a WMS Auxiliary.

Joan Weaver, Presbyterial President, presented a certificate of appreciation to the three Myossio members and Mrs. Sheila Gillies, the Clerk of Session of Knox Church, who were present.

Mr. Wehrmann introduced our guest speaker, Olga Grossutti (Momma Olga), a volunteer from Chez Marie. Chez Marie is a former convent in St. Catharines, which was converted 16 years ago to provide housing and assistance to refugees. Ms. Grossutti was first recruited to act as a translator for the home, but found some of the stories so harrowing that she could not continue in that role. She now acts as a sort of housekeeper, trying to keep order and purchases basic supplies for guests. Donated household items, such as small appliances, are given to the refugees to help them set up house when they are accepted as Canadian residents.

-Hazel McGraw

Niagara Presbyterial met at Crieff Hills on October 12-13 with 25



Sheila Gillies, Knox Clerk of Session, along with 3 members from the Myossio group from Knox Church, St. Catharines—Margaret Combe, Claire Sutherland, and Hazel McGraw.



Winners from the Costume Party at Niagara Presbyterial's Retreat —Karen MacKay (as The Wizard of Oz Scarecrow), Peggy Hugel (as Pebbles Flintstone), and Edith Phillips Lydia).

women in attendance. Christine Cummings opened the first session by having us give our name and something we like which begins with the first letter of our name.

We began with a hymn sing, scripture, and a devotional. Then our theme speaker, Karen MacKay, gave a wonderful introduction, with pictures, of their family trip to Malawi in 2009. Karen and her husband, Dr. Fraser MacKay, first travelled to Malawi 18 years ago when they volunteered in various capacities for a year. They wanted their two teenage sons to experience African culture and to see what good things our country, and The Presbyterian Church in Canada—through *Presbyterian Sharing*—are doing in the field of health, education, and small business loans. They also visited their sponsor child, Mark, that they sponsor through World Vision.

We closed the session with a prayer and the hymn, *Amigos de Cristo*. We then had free time for a walk on the Crieff trails, followed by a wonderful dinner in the dining hall.

The evening activity was a Costume Party. We carved pumpkins as a group activity and then played Boo Bingo. We wound up the evening with snacks that included “severed” fingers.

After a delicious breakfast the next morning, we began with a hymn sing and a short worship service. Karen then gave another interesting presentation and read Matthew 25:40–45. While in Malawi, her family visited various

families, and met Gershon, a young boy whose parents had both died from AIDS and who was looking after his siblings. They also saw a Seed Bank which had been established through Presbyterian World Service & Development. The farmers come and buy a bag of seeds at planting time, and then return two bags of seeds to the Seed Bank following the harvest. They also visited nursery schools, renewed friendships, and made many new ones. Karen says that the people of Malawi have a generous spirit and believe that “if they have anything, they share it.” To conclude, we learned a Malawian song and dance entitled “Moyo Wanga Uma Konda Yesu!” A lively discussion period followed the presentation.

We then had some free time for another walk in the woods, followed by a delicious lunch in the dining hall. After lunch, the Rev. Pearl Vasarhelyi led closing worship and communion.

The ladies of Scottlea are to be commended for a wonderfully managed retreat with great fellowship, delicious snacks, a great costume party and games, inspiring music, and a passionate speaker who really provided insight into life in Malawi

-Elaine Landray

Lanark & Renfrew Fall Presbyterial took place at Westminster Church in Smiths Falls on September 18. Eunice Schrader, of Perth, led us in a lively hymn song. Vice-President, Lois Patchell, welcomed everyone and

President, Lottie Sutherland, constituted the meeting with prayer followed by the WMS purpose. After singing To God be the glory, Melissa Valliquette of Perth led the devotions based on Psalms 117 and Psalm 139.

Lottie Sutherland gave tribute to the late Mary Nichol, missionary nurse of 40 years in the Bhil field, India. The minutes of the June meeting were read and adopted. Lois Patchell introduced the Rev. Eric Muirhead to lead the Bible study. He began by playing the guitar and singing an old Scottish song. The Bible study was based on the temptations of Jesus from Matthew 4:1-11 and new perspectives were gained. The offering was dedicated and grace said for the hearty lunch.

To begin the afternoon, we sang What a friend we have in Jesus followed by another hymn sing. The Rev. Eric Muirhead, our guest speaker, shared about his ministry. He was born and raised in Medicine Hat, Alberta, but had come to Ontario from Saskatchewan. He spoke on his work as a volunteer at a mission in BC and he was delighted that Mary Fontaine had been ordained with to Hummingbird Ministries. In Saskatchewan, he worked with the natives at Mistawasis First Nation where he became interim moderator after their minister died of breast cancer. More recently, he worked with the Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry where he was told, "I loved the residential schools. They were warm and we had food to eat."

Courtesies were extended to the ladies from Smiths Falls and the meeting closed with the benediction.

-Vivian Young

Brockville Presbyterial met at St. Andrew's/Knox Presbyterian Church, Spencerville on October 18. President, Catherine Blatch, Brockville, offered books from the lending library and items for sale before the meeting. The Kemptville group conducted the worship provided by The Canadian Foodgrains Bank asking the question, What is Enough? based on Exodus 16:2-21.

Denise Van Wissen, our guest speaker, spoke of her work with the Maya women in Guatemala. Denise worked with our partners, the *Fraternidad de Presbiteriales Mayas* in the area of health and nutrition. She worked with a group of nutrition promoters and assisted the *Fraternidad* with program planning, monitoring and evaluation, and preparation of annual reports. She spoke of many natural disasters that her family has endured, including landslides,



Genevieve Holding
and Linda Gerry

floods, and hurricanes, and also spoke of the political corruption that is present. Denise, along with her husband and two young children, will return to Central America to continue her work in Nicaragua.

-Donna Wilson

Montreal Presbyterian held their Fall meeting on September 25 at Knox Crescent Kensington and First Presbyterian Church in Montreal.

Grace-Brouen, president of the local group, graciously welcomed us, followed by an interesting account of the history of the church given by Howard Dearlove. Then, the Rev. Roland de Vries conducted worship. Our new president, Linda Gerry, constituted the meeting and reports were given by treasurer, Ruth-Ann Williams, expense secretary, Grace Thorly-Brown, and youth and missions representative, Anita Mack. Anita spoke of the life at Camp Biblique in Richmond, Quebec.

After a very good lunch, the ladies of Côte de Neiges church led us in a hymn sing. Our guest speaker, Anita Mack, spoke on the theme, Women: Beloved by God.

A surprise presentation was made to Genevive Holding as outgoing president by Linda Gerry. She was given an honorary pin to thank her for the long and generous service.



Closing hymn was There's a wideness in God's mercy.

-Lorna J. Smith

LOCAL

On Thanksgiving Sunday, Knox Goderich held a wonderful celebration highlighting the gifts of Hazel McCreath, a 95-year-young member. Hazel contributed so much to the community and congregation over the years—a loving wife and helpmate to her late husband, Bert, mother to Kathleen and grandmother to Alexis and Erinn, member of the Girl Guide organization for some 15 years, many years in charge of the Knox kitchen organizing and preparing dinners and luncheons, a quilter (still going strong), treasurer of the Arthur Circle WMS group for almost 30 years, and still driving and delivering church bulletins to the sick and shut-ins. She is indeed a lady who has served her Lord, her church, and her community.

-Marg McGillivray

Forward in Faith



Thank you to all who contributed to the Women's Missionary Society in 2010. You have made a difference. Through your donations, the WMS helps others and you should know that we have assisted many Canadians to go on mission trips and attend conferences. We have also assisted overseas students with the cost of their tuition and supported projects in India and Europe. And now, with your help, we will help individuals in Gaza and in Canada through the two new Together We Can! projects.

This year is an exciting time and we hope you will join the celebration. Look In—Shout Out, the National Women's Gathering, is building up steam and we are looking forward to a wonderful weekend of workshops, speakers, worship, food, fellowship, and fun together. I hope you will decide to attend if you haven't already registered. The gathering has been financially supported by many different groups within the Presbyterian Church in Canada, including the WMS. This gathering is important for the women of our denomination. For more information, visit www.womensgathering.ca. Financial assistance for those travelling a distance is available by making applications through the WMS.

In a previous issue, I told you how the children of my church have organized a 25¢ collection each Sunday. We have continued that practice into 2010 with funds going to PWS&D instead of the WMS Together We Can Project! as we did in 2009. At the time of writing this, we have collected over \$1,800 for PWS&D. I am hoping we will choose to support Together We Can! again in 2011.

The children take this job very seriously and feel they are a direct part of helping people in other parts of the world. This is how it works. The congregation bring coins that the children collect. During the children's time, they go around collecting coins (and bills) until all the coins are collected, sometimes going to the same person over and over if more coins are available. I think the adults have as much fun as the children. Perhaps this, or a similar idea, could be used in your Church.

In closing, I wish you all a very healthy and happy New Year. Please stay safe and warm during the cold Winter months and keep the WMS on your mind!

Janet Brewer

Circulation News

Katherine Allen



First, a ‘thank you’ goes out to all the *Glad Tidings* secretaries and individuals, who have returned their subscription information to me. I would also like to offer congratulations to all the groups, who increased their subscribers, and special congratulations to the *Glad Tidings*’ secretary of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Warkworth, Ontario, who added 13 new subscribers for 2011. I very much appreciate the efforts of everyone in trying to promote the magazine to others, especially when we receive new subscribers.

I also want to express my thanks in the additional calculations caused by the addition of the HST (and in some areas the GST). Some confusion has occurred, but we hope this will all be ironed out shortly.

One last reminder—you can request up to 20 copies of the magazine for promotion just by contacting me. It is never too late to promote the magazine and new subscribers can be accommodated throughout the year. I look forward to hearing from you!

President’s Itinerary

April 12–13
Southwestern Synodical
Annual Meeting, Goderich
April 28–30
PWS&D Committee Meeting

IN REMEMBRANCE

Betty Wainwright Almonte WMS, Almonte ON	Doris MacKinnon South Kinloss, Lucknow, ON	Mary MacClelland St. Andrew’s, Welland ON
Eva Lorene Hamilton St. Andrew’s WMS, Kitchener ON	Violetta Tuba Edna Smith Auxiliary (WMS), Cheyne Presbyterian Church, Stoney Creek ON	Mabel Clark Stamford, Niagara Falls, ON
Mary Nichol Westminster Presbyterian Church, Smiths Falls, ON		Ann Caldwell Marney Henry Lillian Preslar St. Andrew’s, Kingston ON

Names for In Remembrance can be sent by post or email. Please ensure names are typed or clearly written, and include your WMS group name (or congregation) and location.

NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S GATHERING 2011

DATE: May 20-23, 2011

PLACE: Sheraton Parkway Hotel,
Richmond Hil (GTA), Ontario

INQUIRIES:

skim@presbyterian.ca

(416) 441-1111 OR 1-800-619-7301 Extension 321

REGISTRATION FEES:

\$325 before November 15, 2010

\$425 before March 31, 2011

Family Rate:

\$50.00 off per person (18 years+)

Look
IN
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Glad Tidings

March/April 2011



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Glad Tidings

March/April 2011
Volume 87, No. 2

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*Train children in the right way,
and when old, they will not stray.*

Proverbs 22:6

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Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels.

Glad Tidings challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally.

Glad Tidings through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action.

Glad Tidings provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.



Colleen Wood

From the Editor's Desk

Just before Christmas it happened! I got the email. I had missed it. The front cover of the January/February edition of *Glad Tidings* had the wrong year—it still read 2010! It was already printed and waiting at the mail house. After several calls, I had to make the awful decision to just ... let it go ... send it out with the wrong date. It was going to be too costly to fix the error! Many of you might not have noticed. I am sure some of you did, but you have all been too kind to mention it. Some of you might look at your edition, and say, the date isn't wrong. We were able to produce a sticker to cover my error on the few magazines that are sent from our office.

I reflected on it numerous times since then. Often the song, *Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord*, came to mind as I reflected on it. We are human and we make mistakes. Sometimes that is a good thing. It keeps us humble. It keeps us relying on something greater—God. It also allows others to help pick us up. Whether we are old or young, we need others around us to help mentor us, encourage us, and give us hope. In this month's *Glad Tidings*, you will read of two programs that are doing that with the young.

You will read of two churches that might not seem to have much in common. One is in rural Nova Scotia, and the other one is in the Jane and Finch corridor of Toronto. Both are providing mentors for children. Both are reaching out with God's love to help those children rely on something greater. Both bring hope.

For me, Easter brings hope. No matter how dark things look, we have hope. No matter what mistakes we have made, there is hope. In Christ's crucifixion, the disciples lost their hope, but it was restored for all eternity, in Christ's resurrection. Celebrate that hope with our Easter worship service. This service starts at the beginning with creation, and takes you to that wonderful moment of hope when we remember, Jesus is alive!

Waiting for the Bus

by Kim Webster



I glance at the clock and see it is 2:25 p.m. and Margaret and Joyce, our wonderful volunteers, are busy putting the finishing touches on the craft and snack preparations. I head upstairs and out the back door of the church to meet the school bus. It comes to a stop and the doors open. I wait as the kids come

bouncing across the road, backpacks and coats slung over their arms, giggling and squealing as they tell me about their day. Coats, shoes, and backpacks are dropped by the door and 14 children race downstairs for Children of the Church (COC) at Bethel Presbyterian Church.

Bethel Presbyterian Church is nestled in Scotsburn, Pictou County, Nova Scotia. It is a medium-sized rural church with an enormous heart for mission. Several years ago, there was a bit of a baby boom in Scotsburn, including twins and triplets, which quickly filled the pews with wiggling, busy children. An elder at Bethel had dreamed of having a Christian Educator. Now seemed like the perfect time, so this mission-minded congregation, took advantage of an opportunity.

The Christian Education Permanent Fund was born in December 2004. It enabled the congregation to build up resources, invest money, and use the interest to employ a Christian Educator. This was not a small undertaking and much was learned about funds, capital drives, and investing. A Stewards by Design conference gave the leaders the confidence they needed to pursue the dream, and the Planned Giving Network has given advice on how to invest and receive gifts. The dream has certainly become a reality with new families coming to church and a Christian Education worker hired one day a week.

The program was already up and running when I arrived last May to try and fill the shoes of the previous worker, who had started the program. Twice a month, Children of the Church (COC) and Explorers meet after school. COC kids range in age from five to nine, and Explorers from nine to 12. The energy level they bring with them as they bounce off the school bus certainly keeps things interesting! They are a joy! And it is a joy to work with them and with such an incredible group of volunteers.

The COC children are working their way through *Partners in Possibility: Doing God's Work Together—A Mission Learning and Sharing Experience for Children and Youth* by Linda Shaw. Each session, the children play games, have a snack, make a craft, hear a story,



and respond to the mission work that The Presbyterian Church in Canada is involved in around the world. The children look forward to Margaret's snacks and Joyce's crafts. As they eat their snacks, and do their crafts, the children excitedly tell Margaret and Joyce all about their day at school and what games they hope to play today.

These amazing children are also so excited about mission. They show me what is possible in mission as they fill our Possibility Tree poster with leaves detailing how they are going to live out their faith at home, in school, and in

their community. They are eager to share their thoughts on God and faith with me and I love hearing their mission stories.

After a crazy 90 minutes with me jumping, singing, and playing with the COC kids, I race up the stairs to meet with the Explorers group for an hour. I have three girls who come each week and we are also using the *Partners in Possibility* resource as our guide. The girls work on Possibility Journals which they have created from scratch. They use ribbons, glue, stickers, tissue paper, buttons, and whatever else we

They are eager to share their thoughts on God and faith with me and I love hearing their mission stories.





I love my COC kids for their exuberant joy, my Explorers girls for their giggly creativity, and the youth for their energy and faith.

can find to express their creative side. We fill these journals with our responses to the mission stories we read each week. It could be a prayer, a scripture verse, or a poem about how they reach out to others. While they work, we talk about the mission story for that day and connect it to our daily lives.

While COC and Explorers are the main activities during the school year, I also spend time working as a resource for the Sunday School teachers, and coordinate other events such as the Community Bible School. Each Summer, Bethel hosts about 35 children at the local elementary school for Bible school.

Having it at the school is not only more spacious and cool, but a wonderful way to reach out and be in the centre of the community.

As some of the children get older, Bethel has continued thinking about how to keep the youth in the congregation involved. In November, we held our first youth night, and I was hopeful that at least four youth would attend. Seventeen youth arrived and they can't wait for the next event to be held.

I love my COC kids for their exuberant joy, my Explorers girls for their giggly creativity, and the youth for their energy and faith. I am blessed to be one

of the trusted adults with whom they share their faith. Thankfully, I have great support in this congregation. We have many amazing and dedicated volunteers and our Christian Education Committee is fun and open to new ideas. Working just one day a week in a congregation is new to me. In previous congregations I have served, I have worked full-time with the children and youth. This is my greatest challenge as my dreams and plans are far greater than the hours I have in a week! Yet,

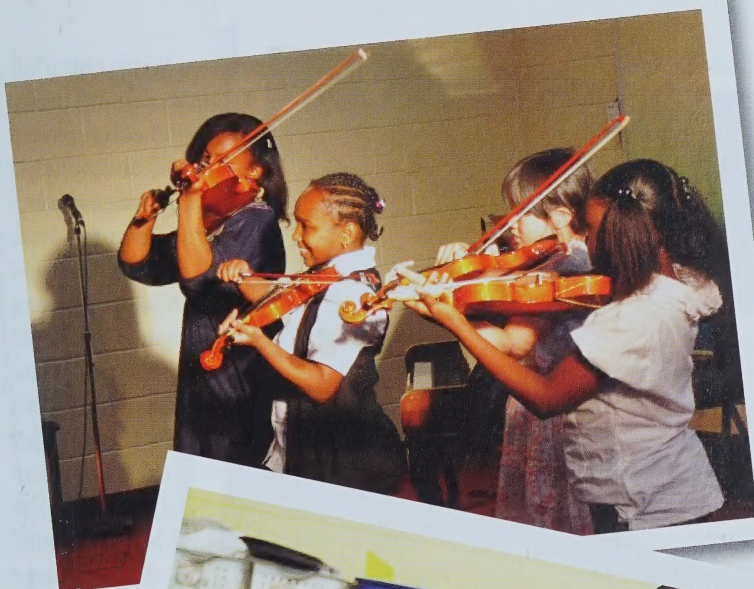
for this congregation, having hired a part-time educator is a great commitment and a show of their faith. It is making a difference!

For me, it is also a blessing. After several years of living in Ontario, my husband and I were thrilled to have the opportunity to return home to Nova Scotia for his new job and to be closer to our families as we raise a busy toddler. I did not expect to be working in children's ministry in Nova Scotia. Yet, God had a plan that I would be

able to continue to work in children and youth ministry! This is indeed part of God's plan for us right now. For me, it is a blessing that this congregation is sharing their children and youth with me so that we can grow and learn in faith together.

Kim Webster grew up in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, and is happy to be back there with her husband, John, and their two-year-old daughter, Violet. She has a background in camping and youth ministry, and has worked at several Presbyterian camps, and within congregations in Prince Edward Island and Ontario. She is currently serving the congregation of Bethel Presbyterian Church in Scottdown, NS, and supply teaching in the area. She also enjoys camping, walking, baking, and various creative activities.





Reaching Out

by Cecile Huxtable

Toronto is known as one of the most multicultural cities in the world. People from all over the world are migrating with one intention in mind—to find peace and happiness. If happiness is knowing that you can do anything if you want to, then the hardest task for most immigrants is to make that move and find that peace and happiness.



Within Toronto, is the Jane and Finch community. This area is infamous for providing statistics about the negative effects of migration. There is major poverty within the community and many parents try to eke out a living on minimum wage jobs. Many experience spiritual, mental, physical, and social brokenness as they try to take their place in the circle of life. Crime, violence, teen-age pregnancy, and poor living accommodations are proportionately spread through all the ethnic groups within this community. Many become very frustrated with the futility of their situation. Others feel that the media representation of the community is extremely biased and inaccurate and this offers other challenges.

With all of this, can anything good come out of Jane and Finch? This was the same question that was asked over two thousand years ago. Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Based on the results of what happened in Nazareth, then it is evident that

We believe that if you empower children you will see a decrease in poverty, illiteracy, illness, and violence.

location does not determine the future of an individual. Goodness can come out of anywhere. For University Presbyterian Church, located in the Jane and Finch community, this is an opportunity and a challenge. While carrying out the great commission, we are working to provide a tower of strength for our community.

In April 2008, University Presbyterian Church launched the Reaching-Up Homework Club. Its goal is to sever the cords of hopelessness in families, especially families with children. We

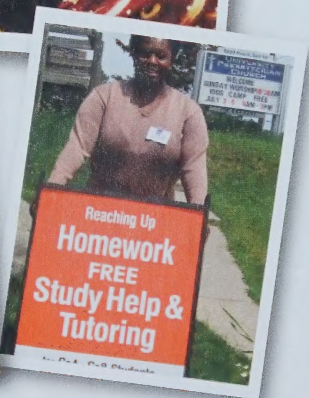
believe that if you empower children you will see a decrease in poverty, illiteracy, illness, and violence. Knowing that there is a brighter future for their children through education, the parents develop an indestructible strength that helps them get through the cares of everyday life. As well, the Homework Club helps to improve literacy skills, and general academic performance, and fosters positive attitude towards school and literacy.

A year after launching the Reaching-Up Homework Club, the Reaching-Up Music School was born with a goal to balance scholastic success with emotional well-being. The music school offers lessons in piano, guitar, violin, and trumpet. It is geared towards building relationships and emotional stability. Also, a choir is now in place to give

parents and children from the community a chance to sing together.

Both programs have proved very successful and rewarding. The parents of children in the Homework Club are very happy with the improvement in their children's report cards, and have therefore wasted no time in advertising the benefits of the program to other families. The homework club has 43 children enrolled in the program and 35 on the waiting list. The music school now has 35 children and 18 adults enrolled in the program with ten on the waiting list. The entire community could see the great work of the music school as they showcased their talents at

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the Christmas concert held on December 5, 2010. The families cheered with glee when they saw the improvement that had taken place in their children since their first concert last December.

Obviously, we require many volunteers to run these two programs. We are thankful for the help of many talented individuals and organizations that assist us with these programs. We receive volunteers from York University (teaching students), Seneca College (Social Service students), National Council of Jewish Women of Canada (Toronto Section), and Costi Immigration Service. Our volunteers are the pillars for our programs and we applaud them for their dedication, emotional support, and expertise. Together, we are bringing peace and happiness to Jane and Finch.

The work of the programs also includes raising funds. The Reaching-Up Ministry has a yearly walk-a-thon, bake sale, and garage sale. These projects assist with funds for the program and also bring about a sense of community and sharing. They also help to fund additional programs out of University Presbyterian Church. Through these fundraisers, Reaching-Up was able to provide summer camps (Kidzfest) that helped families in the community that could not afford childcare and had to work. Eighty-eight children have benefited from this program.

Here at University Presbyterian Church, we try to seize every opportunity to help the community in the pursuit of peace and happiness. The community may need many things, but

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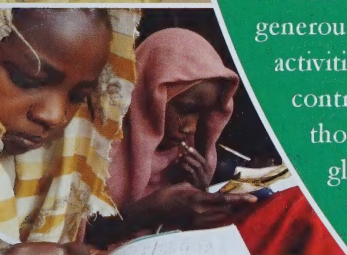


one thing in particular they must develop for their own preservation is an absolute confidence in Christ's loving care. It is therefore our aim to teach others how to maintain mental wholeness while keeping their eyes

focused on the course. Yes, the roads may be rugged and the hills very hard to climb, but one thing we know for certain is that through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, victory is already secured.

Cecile Huxtable is the director of the Reaching-Up Homework Club at University Presbyterian Church. She was raised in an extended family with her grandmother as the homemaker and her mom as the bread winner. Her grandmother used many proverbs and phrases which were aimed at teaching the basic principles of excelling in life. One phrase that stayed with Cecile was, "You are an eagle—not a barn bird."

Coming to University Presbyterian Church to help the children was not an easy task for Cecile, but she remembered the eagle and made the changes that were necessary to succeed. Now, she helps others to do the same.



Merci Zikomo Gracias Thank You WMS!

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PWS&D would like to thank our friends from the WMS for your generous support of our 2010 development and emergency relief activities around the world. Your prayers and financial contributions enable life-changing programs to reach thousands of people. The PWS&D team and our global partners thank you for answering the call to share Christ's love with our international brothers and sisters.



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Reaching Out

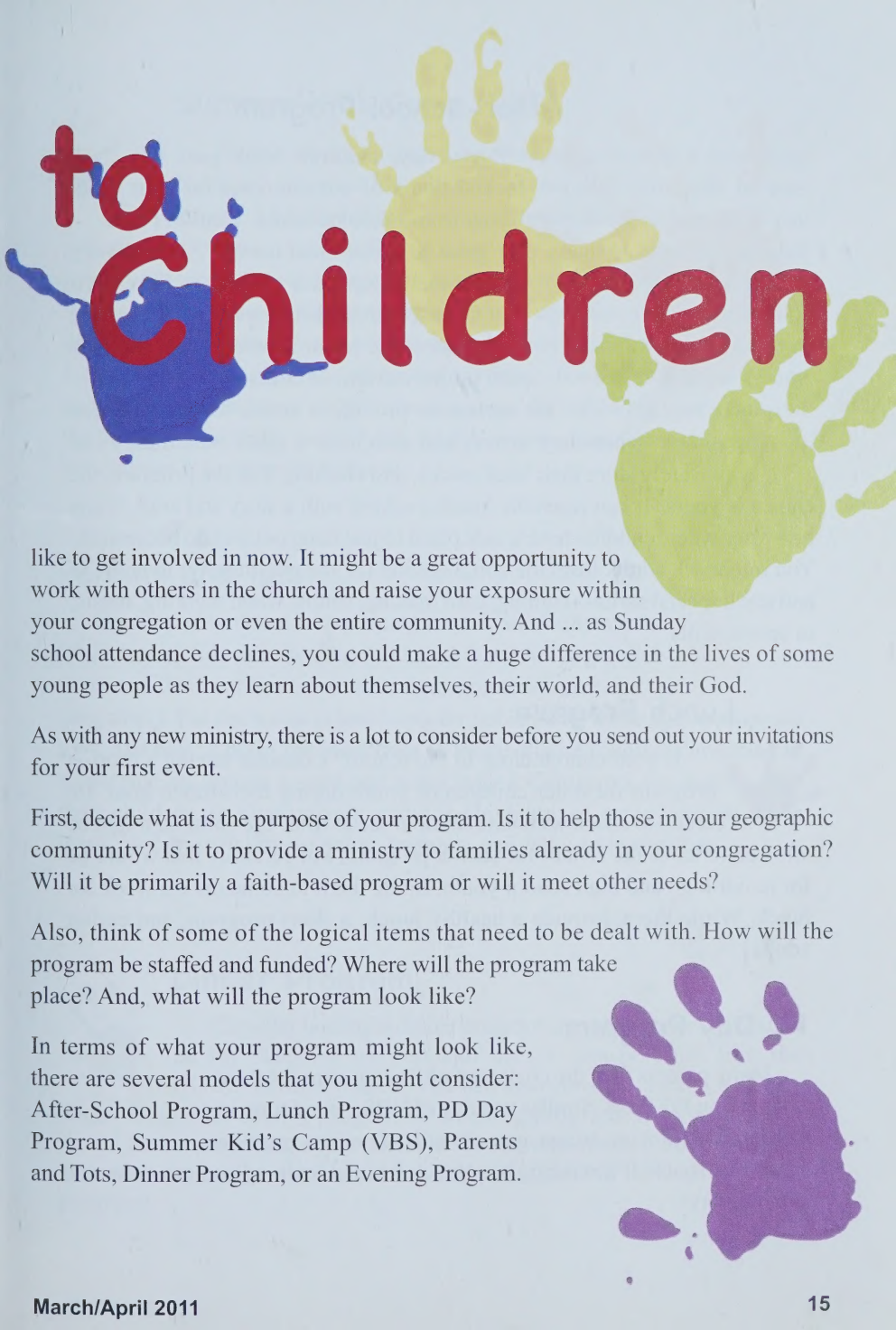
by Colleen Wood



I remember, with joy, attending both Vacation Bible School (VBS) and Pioneer Girls, a mid-week program, when I was younger. My dad, who was also my minister, would often provide substantial leadership to the VBS. He would make balloon animals and tell Bible stories using paper tearing and magic tricks. I also remember well some of the seminary students who came to provide leadership, and I loved singing along to the guitars every morning. And, at Pioneer Girls, I worked hard to get new badges and I loved the snacks provided by caring leaders. I looked up to the women who were my leaders and I learned from their faithfulness and hospitality. I expect they are the reason I have worked in the church most of my life, often with children and youth.

WMS groups have a long history of providing and/or encouraging educational programming for children. Perhaps, this is something your group would





to Children

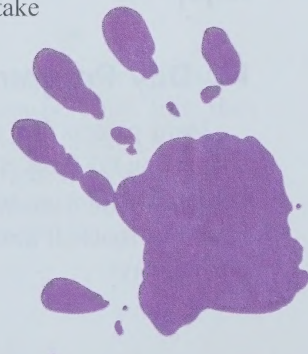
like to get involved in now. It might be a great opportunity to work with others in the church and raise your exposure within your congregation or even the entire community. And ... as Sunday school attendance declines, you could make a huge difference in the lives of some young people as they learn about themselves, their world, and their God.

As with any new ministry, there is a lot to consider before you send out your invitations for your first event.

First, decide what is the purpose of your program. Is it to help those in your geographic community? Is it to provide a ministry to families already in your congregation? Will it be primarily a faith-based program or will it meet other needs?

Also, think of some of the logical items that need to be dealt with. How will the program be staffed and funded? Where will the program take place? And, what will the program look like?

In terms of what your program might look like, there are several models that you might consider: After-School Program, Lunch Program, PD Day Program, Summer Kid's Camp (VBS), Parents and Tots, Dinner Program, or an Evening Program.



After-School Program



Every day, children walk past the locked doors of our churches on their way from school to home. Wouldn't it be great to invite them inside? Alternatively, some schools are willing to have their buses drop children off at alternative places one night a week, with the parents' authorization, of course!

Be certain to provide a snack for the children when they arrive, and also have a place where they can safely store their back-packs, and clothing. For the program, the choice is yours! It can resemble Sunday school with a story and craft. It can be a place where children have a safe place to just hang out and do homework. You might ask adults from the congregation (or the community) to come in and teach special skills—knitting, card making, simple wood working, music, or sports skills.

Lunch Program



Is your church close to the school? Consider having a drop-in program for older children or youth during their lunch hour. Be certain to check with the school to see at what age children might be allowed to leave the school for such a program, but certainly this would be for junior high and high school youth. Invite them to come once a week for lunch. While there, provide a healthy lunch, a short program, and caring adults.

PD Day Program

Many parents face the challenge of finding care for their children on PD Days. Similar to a day of VBS, spend time in crafts, Bible stories, songs, games, and, of course, provide a lunch and snack. It's amazing how much fun and learning you can cram into one full day!





Summer Kid's Camp (VBS)

Most congregations are no stranger to hosting a week-long Summer program for children. Generally, with both parents working, a full-day program is much better attended than a half-day program. If you have traditionally run a half-day program, approach another local congregation to see if together you can provide a full-day program.

One key to a successful Summer camp is to advertise your week well in advance. Many parents begin to plan their children's summer care as early as January or February! The earlier you advertise, the better. I know of one summer camp that hands out information about the following year's camp on the last day of Summer camp! Also, ask the parents within your congregation to advertise it to others they know.

Parents and Tots



Open up your doors one morning a week and welcome the little ones in! Consider hosting a morning event for young children and their caregivers (mom, dad, grandma, grandpa, or babysitter). Put out a nice (clean!) rug for babies with some age-appropriate toys, and have a place for older ones to move around (consider investing in a few ride-on toys or a sand and water table). Caregivers can remain with their children, or alternatively, provide childcare, so caregivers can get a break, and enjoy a time of study, learning, and fellowship together.



Dinner Program

Consider hosting a dinner program one night a week. This can be for families or you can create family units like the LOGOS¹ ministry does. You can also consider adding a family dinner to an after-school program or evening program. How amazing it would be for parents to enjoy dinner at the church with their children every Thursday night after their child has had a fun time at their after-school program!

Evening Program

If you are considering a program for older children, an evening program also might work. My congregation even makes an evening program work for younger children by having a very short and specific program for the younger ones. My son has been a member of the junior choir at St. Andrew's, Brampton, since he was three! The program runs for half-an-hour on Wednesday evenings, beginning at 7 p.m., so Ian is able to be home for his 8 p.m. bedtime. Even for older children, a mid-week evening program should aim to have children home by 8 p.m. A Friday evening program can run a little longer.

An evening program can be a good program to consider if you have adult Bible studies at the same time. While parents are learning, children can be learning too! Just be certain to have both end early.

A few final thoughts:

- train all volunteers in terms of the Leading With Care program of The Presbyterian Church in Canada
- have a clear policy for parents and caregivers on picking children up
- provide clear information for parents regarding their role—when children need to be picked up, what children are allowed or not allowed to bring, who they can contact with concerns, etc.
- consider whether you wish to charge for the program, or receive an offering
- for mission education resources, consider using the Learning Sharing resources offered through the The Book Room.
- if you can, consider hiring someone to coordinate this ministry, or perhaps getting high school students to assist
- consider having an “expert” come in to help with the initial planning. If you are hosting a parents and tots group, invite someone trained in early education to advise on safety and cleanliness. If you are hosting an after-school event, ask a teacher for suggestions.

¹ LOGOS is a weekly ministry for children and youth that includes Bible study, recreation, worship, and family fellowship (a meal). For more information, visit www.thelogosministry.org.



Easter Quiz

1. According to the gospels, what story happened first, The Last Supper, or Peter denying Christ three times?
2. What do pretzels have to do with Easter?
3. Why is Easter so late this year?
4. Whom did Pilate release instead of Jesus?
5. In whose tomb was Jesus buried?
6. Name three symbols associated with Easter.
7. What is the duration of Lent?
8. Where did the name Easter come from?
9. The egg is a symbol of ...
10. Where did the idea of Easter baskets come from?

Answers on page 32

The Power of Love

by Victoria Stirling

As I walked into his room in the Chronic Care Facility, Brian Edwards greeted me with a broad smile. "Nurse," he said, "you'll never guess what happened to me today?"

"Well," I said, "it must have been something very good because you're grinning from ear to ear like a Cheshire cat."

He laughed out loud. "Yes, I suppose I do look a bit like a happy cat. However, I have to enjoy these moments to the fullest when they happen, as they're getting to be few and far between."

"But," I smiled, "I thought you once told me, 'We're supposed to live and enjoy each day just as it comes, as the Lord intended?'"

Brian grinned. "Okay you have got me there; you're right. And, I do try to live by that rule, but as you know for me, sometimes it's not so easy."

"Yes, I know it must be hard for you," I said. "This is why it is so great to see you today in such a happy mood."

I busied myself getting Brian ready to transfer him up into his chair. "So," I teasingly said, "how much longer are you going to keep me on tenterhooks? I would really like to hear what has happened with you?"

"Well," Brian chuckled, "when you stop tossing me around like a sack of corn, and I get my breath back, I'll tell you." I laughed at his choice of words because in a way he was right. Getting any immobilized patient prepared for the special Hoyer lift did require a lot of rolling back and forth of the patient; there was no other way it could be done. Finally, I had part of the lifting device under him and he was all set.

"Okay Mr. Edwards, now you're ready—how about talking."

Again Brian beamed. "Do you remember me telling you that I'm married and have two daughters, Sarah and Alice?"

I nodded. "Yes, it's something you told me a long while ago. Isn't that a photo of them there on your dresser?"

"Yes, it's all of us, taken on the back porch of our old house. Anyway, today my eldest daughter was in with her grandmother, my mother, to see me. Sarah hasn't been in for awhile; she tends to get upset when she sees me like this."

Brian looked at me. "When she was little I was able to do many things with her and her sister. Since I have been in here, my relationship with them has totally changed." I heard Brian's voice break, and he took a moment before he continued. "I love both of my girls, but I wasn't sure anymore of what they thought about me, until this afternoon."

He smiled. "While Sarah and I were talking she told me that she and her sister often speak about me, and the lovely times we all had together." She also said, "I'm still the best dad either of them could ever have. I ask you nurse, what more could a father want to hear?"

"Brian," I said, "that's great; you sure have two exceptional, fine daughters."

He laughed. "I sure do, and as you can see knowing how they feel about me

makes me realize, that even with all my health problems, I'm still a lucky guy."

My throat constricted as I tried to find the right words to answer him. Here was this once agile, active man,

now a quadriplegic, and he considered himself lucky. For a moment I couldn't think of much to say; instead I just nodded, and swallowed deeply.

After I had stood quietly looking down on him I said, "Brian, you hold onto that lovely thought. You're right. Those words are the nicest any father could ever wish to hear. I would have been smiling like a contented cat too if someone said them to me."

I gently patted his shoulder. "Thank you

for sharing your happiness with me. Now, I'd better go and get the lift and another warm body to help get you up."

As I moved over toward the door I found myself marveling at how those few simple words had given Brian so much joy. As well, seeing him this way was uplifting and it put a broad smile on my face too. To me it proved again—love is the finest God given gift we have and it gets even better when it is generously shared.

**"Love is
the finest
God given
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shared."**

A Moose on the Road

by Diana Bond

Our minister has often talked of the work of growing in faith as being, “like water dripping on a stone.” But I have learned that sometimes it strikes us in more startling ways.

This past summer, during a week when our family was dispersed across the country, I found myself driving home alone from a friend’s cottage, along a remote highway, much later in the evening than intended.

Anticipating the four-hour drive ahead of me, I reached into the glove compartment and pulled out a forgotten CD, a recording of a recent St. Andrew’s worship service and sermon.

“Okay,” I decided, “why not?” “I have a four-hour drive ahead of me; it’s as good a time as any to listen to this sermon.” So, I put in the CD.

From out of the car speakers come familiar, comforting sounds: organ music, the background noise of rustling paper, an occasional cough, the squeak of a pew, the squeal of a child, the singing of a hymn. I find myself humming along and joining along to a hymn with the only words I know, “Lord, Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey.”

Alone on a remote highway, on a dark night, I listen to the prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession, and feel like I am sitting in the sanctuary of St. Andrew’s. I feel the presence of the congregation, of our minister in the

pulpit, and of God’s spirit. As I drive up over a hill and around a corner, an enormous moose suddenly strides onto the highway directly in front of me.

I see him and veer hard left, hitting the brakes. At the same time I am oddly calm because I am in a church service.

I am braking hard and think I will avoid him, but the moose panics. I look up and see him charging towards me. I knuckle-brace the wheel and anticipate the worst, eyes squeezed shut, my voice shouting, “NOOO!” I wait for either hooves, or antlers or body to crash through the window.

There is an eerie suspension of time. Then I feel the impact.

The car rocks and bounces, but there is no sound of glass breaking, and no moose in my vehicle. Instead, I open my eyes to quiet blackness, two streams of headlights shining out into the foggy dark, and a large moose—stunned—staggering off of my car and into the night.

I am stunned, but I am alive! Unharmed. I am safe and physically alone in a bubble of quiet.

What just happened?

I start up the vehicle, which blessedly responds. The CD from St. Andrew’s resumes and I continue my drive towards home, still calm. Instead of going into shock, I find myself back sitting in the sanctuary of my church, peacefully and attentive to the sermon, listening for

God, as on any Sunday morning.

By the way, the sermon was, "Work out Your Salvation, in Fear and Trembling (for God is at Work in You)." So, I have been trying to work this out.

Why did I pull out that particular CD, of all choices, minutes before hitting the moose?

Why did the moose step onto my path?

Were these random acts of coincidence or was there a mysterious purposeful intent?

Where is God in all of this?

And how, in fact, does God work?

Perhaps God in God's (terrifying) wit was playing out for me the ultimate Canadian metaphor for a Christian—the dark night, the lonely road, the

wilderness, the moose, and God's protection—the anticipation of certain death and the unexpected grace of LIFE.

A God whose love may be as wild as it is safe and is at work in me. A God who encourages me to decode the mystery that is my life.

Work it out.

That is what I am trying to do, in awe and wonder, fear and trembling, joy and creativity.

Diana Bond is an active member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Ottawa. This experience did happen to Diana and she wrote this story to share with her congregation at St. Andrew's. She wanted them to know that they have become a part of her journey.



WHEN THE H

For Leaders: This service is similar in style to a service of Carols and Readings that many experience at Christmas. There are several readings, each followed by a hymn. Include as many of the hymns as your group is comfortable singing.

The recommended translation for the Bible readings is *The Message* by Eugene Peterson.

Symbols are mentioned at the conclusion of each reading. If you choose to use them in your worship service, they can be held up at the end of the reading or placed on a table for all to see.

OPENING:

Leader: When the heavens were created at the beginning of time

People: God's Spirit swept over the face of the waters and brought life to a formless void.

Leader: When the heavens opened for a brazen fugitive called Jacob

People: God's Spirit awed and mellowed an arrogant heart.

Leader: When the heavens opened to tell of a wonderful birth

People: God's Spirit made poor shepherds run with joy.

Leader: When the heavens opened at the baptism of Jesus

People: God's Spirit took hold of the One who was chosen and marked by love.

Leader: When the heavens opened to bring life to the One nailed to the cross

People: God's Spirit dwelt among us—forever!

HYMN: The heavens declare your glory, Lord (495)

PRAYER: God of life and endless possibility, you spoke this world into being and gave birth to this amazing creation. We thank you for being the God of love, life, and light. We thank you for not giving up on us. When we go off track, you still reach out us, providing a ladder to get

HEAVENS OPEN

by Anita Mack

back on course. You came to us as a vulnerable child, and made it so easy for us to come to you. You graciously allow us to share in your holy baptism and invite us into your radiant reality of life without end. May we humbly live in your light. Amen.

FIRST READING: Genesis 1:1–8

Reader: In the beginning, before life was around, God's Spirit floods the earth. Like a mother hen, God broods life into being. Slowly, the world as we know it springs into life. God's life-giving words are the heart-beat of our creation. God says, "Let there be light" and the light pierces the inky blackness that ruled until then. God sees that light is a good thing and he names this new order day. The darkness, night, still rolls around regularly—but it is no longer the only reality. The next day, God's dimension is created when God speaks the heavens into being. When the heavens open and God's light comes tumbling out, will we declare it good and live in it?

Symbol: A (small) globe

HYMN: When long before (295)

SECOND READING: Genesis 28:10–17

Reader: Life in the desert must have been scary for Jacob. His brother Esau wanted to kill him so he had to run for his life. He must have known that, to a large degree, he deserved the predicament he found himself in: he made his bed by wheeling, dealing, conniving, and lying and now he must lie in it—stone pillow and all. So here he is, camping in the vast, menacing desert. The sun has set, deep darkness has descended, and he's all alone. Or is he? In his sleep he sees the stairway linking earth and heaven. The powerful dream he's been given as pure grace shows him that the creator of heaven and earth cares about him, promises to stay with him and protect him. And not only does he get a new lease on his *own* life, he's told that through him a great nation

will come into being. When the heavens open and new life comes tumbling out, can we say with Jacob: “GOD is in this place—truly. And I didn’t even know it!”

Symbol: A simple ladder made of rope or small sticks

HYMN: Far across the burning desert (188)

THIRD READING: Luke 2:8–18

Reader: Life for shepherds was no picnic. Living in the great outdoors with no fixed address, they were the outcasts of society—smelly, rough, and marginalized. As they settle for yet another night of camping in an inhospitable place where danger was never far away, the shepherds are scared out of their wits when, suddenly, the skies open and God’s angel stands among them. But it doesn’t take them long to realize that they have been given a great and gracious gift. “Don’t be afraid,” the angel says. “I’m here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Saviour has just been born in David’s town, a Saviour who is Messiah and Master. This is what you’re to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger.” When the heavens open and a whole new way of life comes tumbling out, are we willing to run in response and say with the shepherds: “Let’s get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us.”

Symbol: A small blanket

HYMN: Born in the night (137)

FOURTH READING: Matthew 3:13–17

Reader: Life in the desert can’t have been easy for John. Wearing a scratchy camel-hair tunic and living on a Spartan diet of locusts and wild field honey, John had willingly chosen a path of humility, sacrifice, and privation. When his cousin, Jesus, asks him for baptism, he vehemently protests. But who is he to not follow orders from the One who will give life to the world? Who is he to stand in the way of God’s spirit? So he complies—and as the skies open up, God’s spirit floods the earth and God’s peace descends like a dove. At once, Jesus’ life takes on a new course. Not a life of grandeur, prestige, and power, but one that lasts—one that has staying-power. Jesus irrefutably shows us, in humility and love, that he is Life—ultimate, inextinguishable, and contagious. Amazingly, and with a pure gift of grace, we are allowed

to share in this God-given life. When the heavens open and God's love comes tumbling out, are we ready to remember our baptism and hear anew God's life-giving words: "You are my daughter, chosen and marked by my love, delight of my life?"

Symbol: A clear pitcher with water

HYMN: What king would wade through murky streams (184)

FIFTH READING: Matthew 28:1–10

Reader: Life looked bleak for Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. Their friend, in whose presence they always felt so wonderfully alive, was dead. The long night finally over, they hastened to the tomb as the first light appeared. Once there, instead of a deadly calm, they experience a strange and exhilarating energy as the earth starts to rock and reel under their feet. God's angel had come down from heaven! Without much ado, he rolls back the stone that covers the mouth of the tomb and then calmly sits on it. Everyone, including the burley guards, is scared out of their wits! The angel tells the women there's nothing to fear, because Jesus, the one they nailed to the cross, was raised! "Now, get on your way quickly," the angel orders, "and tell his disciples, 'He is risen from the dead. He is going on ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there.'" So the women, deep in wonder and full of joy, start running, just like the shepherds did three decades earlier. But before they get to the disciples, the risen Jesus stops them in their tracks and graces them with his presence. The women, clearly, don't have to go to Galilee to see Jesus: 'Galilee' has come to them—right in the here and now! When the heavens open and God's eternal life comes tumbling out, will we, like the two Marys, exchange our fears for joy and will we go and tell of God's life-giving love—in the certainty that Jesus, alive and well, will meet us in whatever Galilee we find ourselves?

Symbol: A lit candle

HYMN: Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! (261, verses 1, 2, 3, and 9)

Leader: Christ is risen!

People: He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

Anita Mack works as the Area Education Consultant for the Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario, serving the Presbyteries of Montreal and Quebec.

You Want Me To Do What ... Recruiting Volunteers

Are you tired of serving as the president of your WMS group for the third, fourth, even tenth year in a row?

Are you constantly trying to find new people to get help with the bazaar, the anniversary lunch, or Mission Awareness Sunday?

Well, here are a few ideas to consider when recruiting volunteers:

PRAY

1 Pray, pray, and pray some more. Remember, you are not just looking for a few warm bodies, but you are giving people an opportunity to use the spiritual gifts that God has giving them. This is a spiritual matter, so pray about it!

RECRUIT

1 Ask individuals personally. Don't rely on announcements, or bulletin inserts.

2 Put together a brief job description for all your positions, even small jobs. Then you will know what you are asking for, and individuals will know what they are volunteering for.

3 Give them a reason to volunteer. Explain to them why the position is important and how they will make a difference. Don't say, "Mabel, we haven't been able to fill this position, can you do it?" Instead consider, "Mabel, we know you are good at caring for others, and our card secretary makes a really difference in the lives of others by remembering them in times of joy and sorrow. We think this would be a good way for you to continue to share with others. Would you consider serving in this way?"

4 Make it easy. Tell potential volunteers you will give them all the tools they will need to succeed—training, supplies, a budget, contacts, etc.

5 Offer support while they learn the new position. The best is to have outgoing and incoming volunteers work together for a few months to learn all the ropes.

6 Look for the right fit. Get to know individuals in your group and discover what they are good at and what they enjoy. Is someone creative, ask them to help with a bulletin board display? Are they a good administrator? Perhaps they would enjoy being the secretary for your group. Are they a good communicator? Then ask them to participate in Mission Awareness Sunday.

7 Consider rotating positions. Although not ideal, perhaps you will have a different person serve as secretary at every meeting. People are often willing to volunteer once. And, after they have done it once, they might be willing to continue!

8 Consider leaving a position vacant until the right person comes along. Sometimes people will only volunteer when they see a need.

KEEP

1 Have a term for positions. People are much more willing to volunteer for a term than to assume that once they say yes that they will be 'stuck' with the job forever.

2 Consider if you really need to have as many positions as you do? Can you eliminate positions and still function effectively? Be open to change and doing things differently.

3 Thank volunteers regularly. Phone calls, note cards, even small gifts are nice reminders to volunteers that they are appreciated. Having a meeting with your volunteers? Surprise them with a special snack. Did a volunteer organize a special event? Place a picture from the event in a small frame for them. Also, don't forget to pray for your volunteers, by name, at your meetings.

4 Continue to support volunteers. Be in touch regularly to see if there are things that they need to do their job effectively. Be certain to cover all the expenses associated with the position!

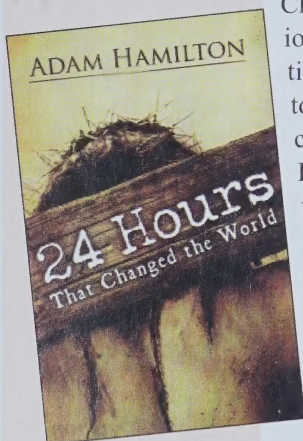
5 Evaluate the work you are doing often. Eliminate what is no longer meeting a need.

6 Try to be flexible with where and how volunteers can serve. Don't have unnecessary meetings and allow volunteers to do as much work as possible when and where they can. A young mom may not be able to attend a meeting, but might be able to organize a special event from her home by phone and email! Someone who is working full-time might be willing to organize a Bible study, but not if it puts them on a 'worship committee' that meets quarterly.

Book Reviews

***24 Hours That Changed the World* by Adam Hamilton**

This book is more than a book—it is part of an entire program looking at



Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. In addition to this book, you can purchase a DVD and a devotional book. All three components of the program can be used separately or build on one another to be used as a

set. These resources can also be used in group study.

The book, *24 Hours That Changed the World*, is interesting as it contains both narrative and commentary. It is an easy read yet is contains lots of depth. I often found myself at the end of a paragraph wanting to read it over again as it had new insights that had not occurred to me before. Hamilton does a good job of piecing the story together using all the gospels and making it both accessible and challenging to the average reader.

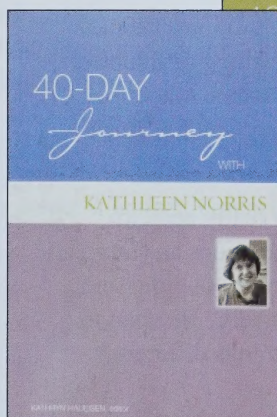
The DVD has us travel to the Holy Land and visit the places where these events took place. Through seven sessions,

we walk the path that Christ would have walked. For those who have not been fortunate enough to visit the Holy Land, this DVD gives some wonderful visuals to the familiar Easter story.

Finally, there is a 40-day devotional book. This was my favourite part of the program. Each devotional begin with a scripture reading, and then tells a little part of the Easter story. It them ties that part of the story into our daily life. Each day finishes with a prayer.

***40-Day Journey with Kathleen Norris* edited by Kathryn Haueisen**

In Spring we are surrounded by renewal as the earth awakens from its Winter slumber. It seems like the perfect time for us to renew ourselves. If you are ready for some spiritual renewal, consider Kathleen Norris as your guide.



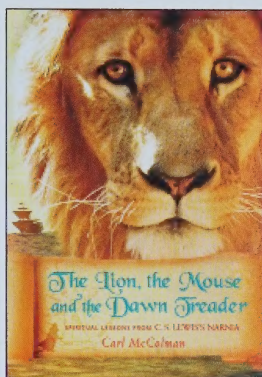
That is the hope of this book—that Norris will act as your ‘spiritual mentor’ though this 40-day journey. Each session begins with a reading from Norris and a biblical passage, followed by some time for silent reflection. Then there are some questions for us to ponder, followed by a time of journaling. Finally, you finish with a prayer. It is a study that takes time—it is discipline. But it is also a great journey as you learn more about yourself, others, and God.

This is just one of a number of 40-Day Journey books published Augsburg Books. Other books in the series include: 40-Day Journey with Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 40-Day journey with Madeleine L’Engle, and 40-Day Journey with Julian of Norwich. Choose your mentor and let the journey begin!

The Lion, the Mouse and the Dawn Treader: Spiritual lessons from C.S. Lewis’s Narnia

By Carl McColman

Having recently viewed *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* at the theatre with my congregation’s junior high group, I was interested in this book. Many of us



have read and explored the theology of Lewis’s, *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, but not as many of us have read the entire Narnia series and considered its theology.

McColman would argue that Lewis’ book, *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, is perhaps the most important of the Narnia books as it,

“most directly maps out the contours of the Christian spiritual life.”

This book is a quick and interesting read. It likely doesn’t come up with anything you might not have realized on your own, but it does package it all nicely into one volume. It would be a great resource if you are planning to show this movie and lead a discussion on it with either youth or adults. As well, if you have a young person in your life who is passionate about this movie, this book might be a good gift for them. Most high school youth would be able to read this book.

***O Lord, I’m Listening
A Lenten Mobile***

If you want a simple way to mark the Season of Lent with children, consider a Lenten mobile. This colourful



The Book Room
50 Wynford Drive,
Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
416-441-1111 800-619-7301
bookroom@presbyterian.ca

‘poster’ quickly becomes a mobile as each day you cut out one symbol to add to your mobile—you just provide the ribbon.

Each symbol contains a 1–2 sentence reflection and a suggested scripture passage to read as you journey to



Easter. With younger children, I might suggest reading these reflections ahead of time to see if it is age-appropriate. If not, consider just reading the scripture passage, or talking about the picture, and reading a related passage from a children’s bible.

Answers from Easter Quiz (page 19)

1. The Last Supper occurred before Peter denied knowing Jesus. Read Matthew 26:26–30 for an account of the Last Supper, and Matthew 26:69–75 for an account of the denial.
2. The shape of a pretzel resembles arms folded in prayer. They are often consumed during Lent, especially in Europe.
3. Easter is a movable feast. It can occur between March 22 and April 25. The process is actually fairly complex as it is based on lunisolar cycles. Basically, Easter is the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after March 21. Though, there are a few other rules that you can research yourself if you are interested. This year the full moon is April 18.
4. Pilate released Barabbas (Matthew 27:26).
5. Jesus was buried in the tomb of Joseph from Arimathea. (Matthew 27:57–60)
6. A few symbols of Easter are the cross, bunnies, grapevine, lilies, chicks, baskets, eggs, hot cross buns, and pretzels.
7. Lent is a 40-day period beginning on Ash Wednesday.
8. Although there is some disagreement, it seems most likely that the word Easter came from name for the pagan goddess Eostre.
9. rebirth
10. Catholics used to bring Easter dinner (in baskets) to mass to be blessed.



The Master Artist

by Christina Hogg

The Master Artist worked one of His best last night.
I awakened today to a lovely scene in white.
Then there will be days He uses colours of green and blue.
The sun, trees, and sky join in adding beauty too.

Small birds will come out from their nests and their shelters.
They'll sing and they'll chirp, and they'll fly helter-skelter.
Creations of God—things that only He can give.
Are made for mankind as long as he lives.

Christina Hogg died on June 2, 2009. She served as a deaconess in many congregations across Canada prior to her death.



Mission in Action

Glenn and Linda Inglis Blantyre Synod Malawi

Dear Friends,

As we enter a new year, we wanted to share a few highlights of the past 12 months as well as to extend our thanks for your ongoing prayers and support.

To say 2010 was a busy year is to use a cliché even though it sums up the situation quite well. In terms of Glenn's work at the Blantyre Synod Health & Development Commission (BSHDC), some of the financial pressures eased as donors regained their equilibrium after the global financial crisis (although we are far from 'back to normal'). The good news is that the synod transferred public health into BSHDC, thus giving us a more integrated approach in our outreach to communities. During 2010, we were able to add a maternal health program, a synod HIV and AIDS education and prevention program, as well as an Integrated Program to decentralize our operations and develop capacity at the community level to define and implement local responses to local needs.

In Linda's work, she had lots of visitors to greet and prepare itineraries for this past year. She had several groups from The Presbyterian Church in Canada, including PWS&D and the Canadian Food Grains Bank (CFGB)

delegations, jolly members from the Coldwater Presbyterian Church, and a very enthusiastic Youth in Mission team. In addition there were groups, large and small from the Church of Scotland, Presbyterian Churches in the USA, Ireland and Australia, and the Reformed Church in the Netherlands. Linda continues to work hard with a group of physically and intellectually challenged adults and children in Ndirande Township. Tidzalerana (we must help one another), as it is called, is fully managed by volunteers and we are grateful that it has official support through 'Gifts of Change.' Linda is also chair of the Open Arms Board, a residential program for infants and toddlers, often AIDS orphans, who have been abandoned or lack adequate family support.

This was also the year of our furlough. Glenn used the word *furlough* in a memo at work and no one knew what it meant. One person 'googled' it and learned a possible meaning was a temporary pardon from prison! But no, it's not like that at all. Glenn had a nice break in Vancouver in August spending lots of time with Naomi, as well as Jocelyn and Ryan who were en route from Nigeria to China after finishing four years teaching in Africa. Glenn also had a mini-retreat with long-time friend, Elly Bradley, which helped to recharge his batteries. Linda arrived in

Toronto later in August for 'the big event.' Luke and Carly were married in Galt-Cambridge on August 28 at the beautiful home of Carly's parents. It was a splendid setting and a wonderful day as we also were able to visit with friends and family we had not seen for over three years. By the way, the bride was beautiful and the groom quite handsome (and the officiating clergy didn't cry).

Oh yes ... church! A highlight was a visit to the Atlantic Synod where Ken Stright arranged a very busy, but enjoyable itinerary for us. We visited congregations in Dartmouth, Moncton, Pictou Presbytery, and Cape Breton Island. It was a real treat for us to participate in the WMS Synodical in St. John's, meeting many wonderful people and sharing stories of our work in Malawi. We also visited congregations in Ontario: Bolton, Galt-Cambridge, Orillia, Dundalk, and Thornbury. We appreciate the warm hospitality we received as well as being able to communicate the work of our church through International Ministries and PWS&D.

Mid-October found us back in Malawi with lots of work before us—and two happy pups to greet us. It was extremely hot this year and everyone was relieved when the rains finally arrived in December and so far are holding quite well.

Malawi moves into a difficult year. At BSHDC, we are running three emergency food distribution and recovery programs in the Balaka area—about

130 km north of Blantyre. One is supported by CFGB through PWS&D so we are very proud of that one. (The other two are sponsored by the Norwegian Government and OXFAM.) Although there is enough maize in the country, rains were patchy last year and there were areas without sufficient harvest. All the food is locally sourced—the problem is many people have neither money nor transport.

In other issues, there are alarming indications that the government, after winning a massive majority in 2009, is moving to a more closed and autocratic posture. The Global Fund turned down Malawi's 2011 proposal for HIV and AIDS interventions, which threatens to drastically limit the impressive gains the country has been making in this area over the past five years. (At this time we do not know why the proposal was rejected.) And despite increases in food production, poverty levels remain high with about 60% living on less than \$2 a day and, of that number, 38% on less than \$1 a day. But, churches grow and many people face the hardships of life with faith and hope that would put many in more affluent countries to shame.

Our prayer is always that Malawians will achieve the quality of economic growth and political stability commensurate with the quality of the people who dwell in 'the warm heart of Africa.'

May the good Lord bless and keep you in 2011.



Brian John





ron's Photos



Brian Johnston
Romania

I have continued to be busy the past several months. In July, I taught English in the Hungarian village of Nagygalombfalva for one week. This village has a large child population and over 50 elementary and high school students attended the classes. At the same time, the pastor had organized a camp for the Roma (gypsy) population which numbers more than 200. A pastor and a youth group from Germany were also involved in a socialization program.

During August, I was once again involved with an artistic camp involving many students as well as the invited artists. The village, Zsobok, where the camp is located, has a well established orphanage and the children there were able to be experience many of artistic events. As well, I decided that starting in September, I would go every two weeks to assist these orphans in developing their English and music skills.

Each September, I am always excited to meet the new first year students and I can say that we have another group of promising young men and women. We had another big vocal concert on November 17, once again combining a mixture of Hungarian and Romanian

**Overseas
Staff
Birthdays**



March

31 - Michael Tai, Taiwan

April

11 - Sean David Allison, Cameroon

17 - Peter Daniel Pandy-Szekeres,
Hungary

22 - Linda Inglis, Malawi

artists; four vocalists, two pianists, a flutist, and a cellist. On December 5, I worked with Michael and Terry, pastors of the English church, to produce a special Advent service. The program included many well known carols, as well as selections from Handel's Messiah.

I wish to thank all the staff members of International Ministries for their ongoing encouragement of my mission activities and to all those who support Presbyterians Sharing. I also thank the groups and individuals who supported the "Share the Gift of Music in Romania" from the Gifts of Change program.

If you are interested in seeing more of Brian's photographs, visit his website at: www.brianjohnston.go.ro

Mission Awareness Sunday is May 1, 2011

Join as congregations across Canada celebrate the mission of our denomination and promote the work of the WMS and AMS.

In Memoriam

Evelyn Gladys Murdoch passed away on October 20, 2010. Evelyn was a devoted and caring diaconal minister and contributed greatly to the Christian education of children and to the work of the Women's Missionary Society.

Evelyn graduated from the Missionary and Deaconess Training School. After graduation, Evelyn was appointed to St. Matthew's Centre in Vancouver from 1957 to 1961. She then returned to her home province of Saskatchewan and was appointed Deaconess in Saskatoon Presbytery. She was in charge of Mission and Christian Education. In November 1968, she was appointed by the Women's Missionary Society (WMS) to serve within Hamilton Presbytery as Presbytery Deaconess.

In September 1971, Evelyn was transferred to the Organization Department of the WMS. She served as an Educational Resource Person in the Presbyteries/Presbyterials of Niagara, Hamilton, and Brampton. Evelyn worked closely with Presbyterial and Synodical Executives and Presbytery Congregational Life Committees.

In January 1978, when Brampton Presbytery/Presbyterial was reassigned to a staff person in the Toronto and Kingston Synodical (now called Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda), Evelyn continued to serve as Area Educational Consultant for the Presbyteries/Presbyterials of Hamilton and Niagara.

The multi-faceted work of area consultant was always an enjoyable challenge to Evelyn. She was always available to assist WMS groups in their planning, especially preparing for their retreats. She also provided advice to Sunday school staff, spoke to WMS groups, and spent time conferring with sessions. She would sometimes leave home before breakfast, not to return until evening.

Evelyn served the Presbyterian Church in Canada for 35 years, retiring in 1992. At the time of her retirement, Evelyn said that she expected to continue to be active in the WMS and the church. This, she continued to do.

Evelyn is predeceased by her parents, brothers Willie, Peter, Alex, and George and sister Catherine. Survived by one brother, Douglas Murdoch of Kanata ON, one sister, Isobel Masur of Calgary AB, her lifelong friend Martha Ann Newland of Hamilton, as well as three generations of nieces and nephews. A memorial service was held at Southgate Presbyterian Church on November 20, 2010.

(Adapted from the eulogy given by Wilma Welsh at the memorial service for Evelyn Murdock on November 20, 2010)

In the Society

PRESBYTERIAL

Waterloo-Wellington Presbyterial held their Fall rally at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Mount Forest on October 18. Upon arrival, Helen MacLean and Marilyn Lamont greeted WMS members and then they were treated to a delicious lunch.

Displays of fair trade products and the upcoming National Women's Gathering were available for perusal.

Donna Henry, president, constituted the meeting and led the women in reciting the WMS purpose. Eleanor Huffman, president of the Mount Forest Auxiliary, welcomed all who were present.

The opening hymn, In Christ there is no east or west, was followed by a

thought-provoking message given by the Rev. Nan St. Louis. Special music was shared by Sherry Kerr and her daughter, Janice. Helen Cleghorn prepared and distributed the financial report.

Mary Helen Garvin, the guest speaker, spoke about her recent trip to Malawi and shared how her goals were achieved and even exceeded her expectations. Through the use of her teaching manuals, children in Malawi were helped in dealing with difficult situations. She was also pleased that a method was found to continue and sustain her educational project.

Donna Henry closed the meeting with prayer.



Rev. Nan St. Louis, Mary Helen Garvin, and Helen Cleghorn

The halls were alive with the sound of music at St. Andrew's church in Barrie on October 2. **Barrie Presbyterial's** day apart theme was MP3—Music for Praise, Prayer, and Practice. Catherine Brown led the day. Since an instrument is just an extension of our hands, Catherine brought a djambe (drum) and tambourines for some to play. We also all had the chance to play the spoons.

Catherine led the singing of hymns and choruses pertaining to the theme, and even had us singing in sign language! The Rev. Rick Horst also led us in communion.

Forty women enjoyed this musical day.

-Jill Pardy

London Presbyterial held their annual mission day on September 30 at Knox Presbyterian Church, St. Thomas. 'All God's People' was the theme for the day. After enjoying coffee and snacks, Eva Murray and Marg McCullough led a sing-song of our favourite hymns.

Mary Lou McKay, president, welcomed everyone and constituted the meeting with opening prayer and the WMS purpose.

The Rev. Ian Johnston, interim minister at Knox, brought greetings and Pauline Lindsay provided a council report. After the roll call, and a treasurer's report, the Rev. Anne Yee Hibbs led the group in an interesting Bible study entitled, *Who is my Neighbour?* Using the scripture passage of The Good Samaritan, and discussion questions, it was determined that everyone is our neighbour in some way.

Marion Weldon then reviewed literature from The Book Room, and the Knox WMS ladies provided an enjoyable lunch.

The afternoon session began with another sing-song. National WMS President, Joan Smith, gave a Power-Point presentation of her exposure tour of the northern interior of British Columbia as our guest speaker. Joan helped us better understand the Cariboo ministry, the dedication of the missionaries working in that area, and the importance of us supporting this area. Joan conveyed how 'seeing' the mission work in action, reinforces a real need to support mission!

After an update on the National Women's Gathering, New St. James WMS led in a short worship service. Mary Lou McKay closed the meeting with prayer.

LOCAL

In December 1910, the women of **Grace Presbyterian Church, Calgary**, asked permission from the Session to form a missionary society. This was welcomed unanimously and was called "The Women's Missionary Society of Grace Presbyterian Church." Throughout the ensuing years this Grace Church Auxiliary supported, in cooperation with other branches of the national Women's Missionary Society (WMS), workers overseas and in Canada with prayer, study, and finances. In the early 1950s, the Junior Women's Auxiliary of the WMS changed its name to Grace Bethany and the group began to meet



in the evenings to accommodate those young women who worked or had other responsibilities in the daytime.

Today, Grace Bethany continues to be actively involved in the life of the church. Each May, in conjunction with

the Women's Fellowship, Grace Bethany organizes a Thank Offering Dinner. All women in the congregation, as well as seniors in neighbouring homes, are invited to participate in this free-will offering event. At this year's dinner, Leah Wetter was welcomed as a guest speaker. Leah gave an excellent PowerPoint presentation and talk about her three months working as a physiotherapist in Guatemala. Proceeds of \$2100 from the evening were divided equally among the Association of Parents and Friends of People with Disabilities in Santiago, Atitlan, Guatemala, and Presbyterian World Service and Development. In the past, other successful dinners have included speakers on overseas mission trip experiences, and speakers from local groups, such as Ten Thousand Villages and Samaritan's Purse.



Thanks from Wilma Welsh to all the WMS members who sent cards, made donations to the Sam Travis Miller Fund of the WMS for the children of Jobat, or attended the Memorial Service for her brother Sterling Welsh who died on November 12, 2010. It was very meaningful for her to have the support of the women of the church during this difficult time.

Tweedsmuir Memorial WMS recently packed up 326 pneumonia vests, as well as baby caps, and flannel blankets. Others have also been knitting scarves and several other warm items for Evangel Hall in Toronto. Pictured is a display of the items after a Sunday morning worship service.



Leila Dixon, life member of Knox WMS, Port Carling recently celebrated her 100th birthday. She was presented with a Certificate of Recognition, a pin, and photo album containing pictures of WMS activities throughout the year.

Corrections

As mentioned in my editorial there are two corrections for the January/February *Glad Tidings*.

The cover should read January/February 2011.

Lorna Teare was incorrectly spelled in our thank you to her on page 38.

My apologies for these errors!

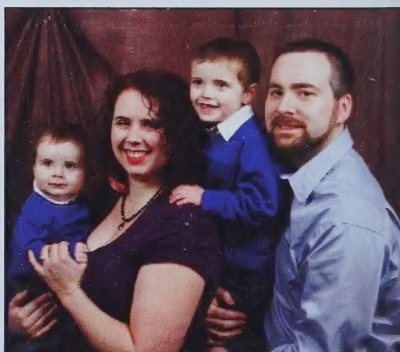


On October 24, 2010, we celebrated our 100th anniversary as a WMS auxiliary at our Thankoffering Service at Thornhill Presbyterian Church. As part of the celebrations, we, the WMS, presented a Certificate of Recognition to our long serving treasurer, Audrey Smith. Pictured is Audrey with some of our other WMS members.

Announcements

Patricia Browne has decided to not return to The Book Room at the end of her maternity leave. With two young boys at home, Patricia has decided that a long commute and full-time work would be too much for her and her family. We will miss Patricia's bubbly personality, her attention to detail, and her love of books. We wish her all the best!

We would also like to announce that **Stevie Cameron** will be the speaker at the National Presbyterian Women's Gathering Celebration Banquet.



The Browne Family (left to right): Jack, Tricia, Tristan, and Ryan.

Forward in Faith

Have you heard about our new Together We Can! projects? Have you considered contributing? The last two projects (building a hostel for the Jobat School in India and providing school supplies for children in Eastern Europe) were a resounding success!

The final figures collected were \$155,472.79 for the Jobat School hostel and \$50,526.95 for school supplies for Eastern Europe. The construction of the hostel is underway with the opening expected in the Fall of 2011, and we are able to help the schools in Eastern Europe support their programs for a couple of years. In fact, with WMS support, we were able to keep these schools open.

We now have two exciting new projects for you to consider and they are already well underway. The first project is the support of health clinics in the Gaza Strip, and the second involves refugees programs in Canada. These are not bricks and mortar projects, but projects that help people directly in a time of need. You can make a difference in people's lives.

You can also help us to get the word out about these two worthy projects. Please, make every attempt to share the news about them. Information is available from the WMS office, in *Glad Tidings*, or on the WMS website (www.wmspc.ca). With the help of congregations, individuals, and various groups, Together We Can!

And, these projects are a great way to honour someone special. Consider a donation in honour or memory of someone you know.

I hope you will "take on" these projects as you did the last ones. Over the next year-and-a-half, learn, share, and contribute to these exciting projects so you, along with the WMS, will continue to make a difference in the lives of others.

Respectfully submitted, Janet Brewer



Donations can be sent to the WMS office. Please mark which project you wish to support on your cheque.

Circulation News

Katherine Allen



How do you share your *Glad Tidings*? We are always trying to find ways to encourage others to read *Glad Tidings*. If you are planning a special event, meeting, or Mission Awareness Sunday, we can supply you with up to 20 promotional copies of *Glad Tidings*. And remember, a subscriber does not have to be a WMS member!

As you may know, we have recently changed from cassette tape to CD for our audio version of *Glad Tidings*. We want to see this version of *Glad Tidings* get more widely used within the WMS and the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Do you know someone from a nursing home that might like to receive a copy of the *Glad Tidings* on CD. How about a younger woman with a daily commute? Either might benefit from the *Glad Tidings* on CD. A sample CD is available from the office.

Finally, one last note, we still have some outstanding subscription lists. If your group has disbanded, please ensure that the list of subscribers is returned as we need the information from the list in order to make any appropriate adjustments.

Glad Tidings is on CD

Struggling to find time to read?

Want to listen to something more meaningful than your local radio station?

Eyesight not what it used to be?

These are all great reason to subscribe to Glad Tidings on CD!

With Glad Tidings on CD, you can listen to engaging articles on your morning commute, while cleaning the house, on a morning walk, or whenever you have a few minutes to spare.

To subscribe, contact Katherine Allen at kallen@presbyterian.ca, or by calling 1-800-619-7301, extension 326.



PASS ME ALONG:

Please share this copy of *Glad Tidings*. This helps others to learn about the great work of the WMS and also promotes the magazine. When you have finished reading your copy, share:

A Moose on the Road with a colleague who travels for work (p. 22)

Brian Johnston's Photos with an amateur photographer (p. 36)

Easter Quiz with a spouse or friend (p. 19)



IN REMEMBRANCE

Margaret Toth
Daughters of Knox,
Knox Church,
Acton ON

Ruth Sloan
Grace Bethany WMS,
Grace Presbyterian
Church, Calgary AB

Flin Wyatt
St. Giles Athalie Read
WMS, Calgary AB

Elsie Young
Sarah Dunning Auxiliary,
Dundas ON

Charlotte Johnston
Glenarm Presbyterian
Women's Group, Knox,
Glenarm ON

Ann Endicott
St Andrew's WMS,
Guelph ON

Mrs. Doreen Birk
Mrs. June Fox
Miss Evelyn Murdoch
Jean Bailey Auxiliary,
South Gate Church,
Hamilton ON

Christina W. Hogg
St Andrew's, Nanaimo BC

Mrs. Peggy McKay
Annie Purves Group WMS,
St. Paul's, Port Hope ON

Mrs. Mildred Eaide
Mrs. Jean McIntyre
Josephine Nixon-Grace
Stone WMS,

Westminster Presbyterian,
Sault Ste. Marie ON

Dr. Dorothea Kulis
Mildred Tyrrell
St. Andrew's WMS,
Scarborough ON

Mrs. Mary Buckton
South Kinloss WMS,
South Kinloss ON

Mabel Carson
Muriel Haw
Mrs. Fran Heard
St. Andrew's, Swinton
Park ON

Molly Doka
St. John's Presbyterian
WMS Group, White
Rock BC

Names for In Remembrance can be sent by post or email. Please ensure names are typed or clearly written, and include your WMS group name (or congregation) and location.

Planting Seeds of Hope for Generations to Come

How Planned Gifts Are Growing the Church and Its Mission



Photo credit: Chang Park



In 2008, University Presbyterian Church launched its Reaching Up Ministry for young people in the Jane and Finch neighbourhood of Toronto. The after-school ministry offers students free tutoring with their homework and free music lessons on piano, violin and trumpet. Seed money for the ministry was provided through a grant from the Creative Ministry with Children and Youth Fund, one of the Mission Priority Funds of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Begun through undesignated bequests to the PCC, the Mission Priority Funds were established to provide Presbyterians the opportunity to channel their planned gifts into vitally needed areas of ministry and mission that match the areas of their interest and passion.

To learn more about
the Mission Priority Funds
and how your planned
gifts can make a lasting
difference, call the
Planned Giving Office
at 1-800-619-7301
or visit
[presbyterian.ca/
plannedgiving](http://presbyterian.ca/plannedgiving)

What will your legacy be . . .

PM40013283

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Please report any errors/changes in address

Glad Tidings

May/June 2011





18 Miles and Miles of Small Steps by Vivian Bertrand

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Glad Tidings

May/June 2011
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CIRCULATION: Katherine Allen

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This month many of us will gather. This month, women from Presbyterian congregations across Canada, ecumenical friends, and international guests, will gather. This month, we will listen, we will share, and we will dream together. This month, at the National Presbyterian Women's Gathering, we will hear from amazing women and we might just discover amazing new things within ourselves. And, for those who cannot join us, I trust that in this edition of *Glad Tidings* you will also be introduced to some amazing women with amazing stories.

In this edition, you will hear from an ecumenical friend, Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party of Canada. Elizabeth is a Christian, a lawyer, a politician, a writer, and an amazing advocate. Her journey of advocacy began about the same time she learned how to talk, and it's an inspiration for all of us, who strive to change the world. May her work encourage you to speak out and make a difference.

You will also hear of the amazing journey of our own Mary Helen Garvin. Mary followed up on an 'idea' that was presented to her over 25 years ago. Mary, in her retirement, is using her gifts and talents to help children, and their caregivers, in Malawi. Travel with her to Malawi and read about her amazing work.

Closer to home, you will meet the Rev. Deb Stanbury and Nicole Alexander. Nicole is rejoicing and tasting her success as a client of Yonge Street Mission's Evergreen Centre for Street Youth. This young woman is just beginning her amazing journey and with her growing self-confidence her future goals are more obtainable than ever.

Finally, meet Vivian Bertrand. Vivian is striving to be an amazing mother, wife, and Christian. Her journey is her preparation to run a half-marathon. And as she runs, she learns about herself and her creator. Celebrate her small victories, and consider your own. You may not be a runner, but each day you accomplish many things—sharing with a friend, meeting a goal, finishing a project at work or home, caring for others and even ourselves. Celebrate today what you have accomplished!

Just like each of these women, you are amazing. As God's creation, you have been given gifts and skills to make a difference in this world. Take time this month to reflect on who you are, chosen and loved by God, and consider where best to use the gifts you have been given.

Victories

Big and Small

by Elizabeth May

At 56-years-old, it is easy to look back on my life as a series of campaigns. It is encouraging to note how many of those campaigns have resulted in victories.

The first campaigns of my life began before I could walk. When I was a baby, my mother was horrified to learn that testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere would lead to an increase in childhood leukemia. Strontium 90 was being distributed globally—concentrating in grasses eaten by dairy cows, and mimicking the calcium that was being stored in the bones and teeth of growing children. This information turned my mother into an activist. She started

an organization, “The Connecticut Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy,” (I grew up in Connecticut) and she began every letter to the editor, “As a housewife, a mother, and a Christian ...”

I attended my first press conference when I was three, as a prop. My mother was one of 18 plaintiffs, suing the governments of the UK, US, and USSR, to stop nuclear weapons testing in the atmosphere. All the other plaintiffs were Nobel Laureates. By the time I was in first grade, the Global Test Ban Treaty had come into being.

Then my mom got involved opposing segregation, working through

Photos: Saanich-Gulf Island Greens



the Council of Churches. After that came her work opposing the war in Vietnam. The groups I remember were Another Mother for Peace, with its memorable slogan, "War is not healthy for children and other living things," and Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam.

The campaigns of my childhood all led to profound social change—advances in civil rights, a safer world, and justice.

By about age 13, I had found my own causes. The death of our sheep from pesticide poisoning made me an environmentalist. As a high school student, I campaigned and organized to stop the widespread use of pesticides, and to eliminate phosphates in detergents, and I even drafted a law for the state legislature to ban throw-away soft drink containers. By the time my family moved us to Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, DDT had been banned, phosphates in detergents were made illegal, and shortly after arriving in Canada, my bill was passed in the Connecticut legislature.

When I was 23, I joined a group of local residents opposing the

provincial governments and the pulp and paper giant Stora Kopparberg's (100% owned and controlled in Sweden) plans to spray organophosphate insecticides from fixed wing aircraft over all the forests of the island, thereby encompassing many communities. We had to object to spraying plans every year for four years, but we won that one too. We stopped plans to mine uranium in Nova Scotia and won a moratorium. The NS government approved spraying Agent Orange over the forests in the early 1980s. By then I was a law student. We won a temporary injunction to stop the spraying, but, more than a year later,

lost the court case. The judge ruled that



Agent Orange was safe, but by then every other source of Agent Orange had either banned it or stopped its exports, so there was none to be had and we were never sprayed.

To this list of victories, I can add campaigns in which I worked to stop acid rain, save South Moresby, protect the ozone layer, ban lead in gas, eliminate more cancer-causing pesticides (alachlor, fenitrothion, and more), change logging methods, stop the export of Great Lakes water, kill the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, stop the World Bank loans to the Altamira dam in the Amazon (thus stopping the dam), protect the coastline of Nova Scotia from in-shore oil and gas, expand protected areas, and more victories big and small.

It is through the unsung and untold truth of citizen advocacy and environmental movement activism that we win victory after victory. The problem is that the scale, scope, and urgency of new threats, leave us too busy for the celebration each victory deserves.

Jesus taught us in the Sermon on the Mount that if we ask, our need will be answered and if we knock, the door will be opened. I have never worked on any cause without linking my efforts to a constant prayer. I have written and argued for those fighting against monumental odds to hold fast to their principles, to resist unprincipled compromise, and to expect the miracle that will deliver a victory.

Prior to each of the above victories, there have been nay-sayers and pundits, who would sagely explain why victory was impossible. Working to accomplish the impossible requires, by definition, a leap of faith. That faith can be, as is mine, in our Lord, or it can be in the rightness and justice of our fellow humans in a caring society. But a willingness to put self-interest aside and work for change yields amazing results. Miracles happen.

People often ask, since I seem to have been constantly campaigning for a better world my whole life, why I am not tired or discouraged. I confess to often feeling tired, but I cannot allow myself to indulge in despair or to feel discouraged. The stakes and the threats (particularly those posed by the climate crisis and the increasing risk of run-away global warming) have never been higher.

My favourite words in my weekly worship are found in the doxology, "God, whose power working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine" A power that can do infinitely more than we can even *imagine* is within each of us. And with that faith, no obstacle is too great.

Elizabeth May O.C. is a long-time Anglican, who taught Sunday school for 40 years and has studied theology. She is former Executive Director of the Sierra Club of Canada and is leader of the Green Party of Canada.

Spider Webs

by Maureen E. Kowal

In the shed,
In the shade,
of an old walnut tree.

Are strands of spider webs,
stretched across the crumbling
window sill.

I raise my hand, to wipe away
all traces.

And in that moment,
I see.

A handiwork in the intricate webs.
And how the morning dew,
sparkles like diamonds within.

I think the webs are like me.
Feeling so tightly stretched.

Forgetting how God works within.
Filling my heart, with words of hope
So I can try again.

Psalms 46:1

God is our refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble.

A few thoughts to ponder ...

Consider the intricate work that a spider puts into its web. Compare it to some of your current work.

Does your current work leave you feeling tightly stretched?

Consider how God is with you in your work. How does God equip you?
How does God renew you?

To Triumph

is to Overcome Your Fears

Self-Confidence Through Martial Arts

by Deb Stanbury with Nicole Alexander

“To triumph is to overcome your fears and inhibitions and do what makes you happy,” stated Nicole Alexander, as I interviewed her about training in the art of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.

Nicole was introduced to the sport through the Women’s Self-Defense Program offered by the Yonge Street Mission’s Evergreen Centre for Street Youth through the Toronto BJJ.

Nicole has been training in the art of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu for just over a year now, originally training once a week through the self-defense class, but as her confidence and love for the sport has grown, so has her weekly training schedule. She now trains as often as she can, up to five hours a week providing her work schedule does not impede that.

Nicole and I talked about how the program has helped her and she reflected, “Before this program, I never thought I’d be able to get in and (grapple) with a guy who’s bigger, taller, and stronger than me.” She added, “It took me a long time to do regular (co-ed) classes.”

We discussed what she had learned along the way, and Nicole said, “I learned that I could be

stronger and stand up to men bigger, stronger, and tougher than me. I learned that I did have the confidence to stand up for myself in every aspect of my life.”

Josh Rapport, the director of Toronto BJJ and instructor for the Evergreen classes, reflected on our Women’s Self-Defense Program, “Young women such as Nicole, with so much untapped potential, need a program like this that not only preaches, but truly teaches confidence in a real way. We look forward to being able to expand this program and offer it to many more deserving women.”

I asked Nicole how she had triumphed through her Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu training and what fears she had to overcome. “I had to overcome my awkwardness,” she said. “I had to overcome my inhibitions to (grapple) with guys. In a sport that’s mostly dominated by men, you have to get used to that.”

In Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, like other martial arts, progress is measured by a belt system. However, unlike other martial arts, the belt system has fewer levels and progress along the way is marked by stripes. “I was surprised about getting the first stripe,” said Nicole. “I had just started to seriously train when I got it, and it showed me that the progress that I thought I’d made really was there—it was apparent to other people.”

Nicole stated that moving forward she hopes to continue training and get into the competitive aspect of the sport, by competing in various tournaments. She hopes to move up in belt rank. With her growing sense of self-confidence and strength, Nicole would like to begin training in other martial arts, like Muay Thai Kick-Boxing.

Since our interview, Nicole has been given her second stripe. She is well on her way to reaching her goals. After this promotion, her instructor, Josh, stated, “At Toronto BJJ, we have had the privilege of seeing both men and women become world champions. We understand what it takes to excel and reach lofty goals. Jiu-Jitsu is a microcosm of life and given what we’ve seen from Nicole, we know her future is unlimited. We hope she applies that to her training and to the rest of her life as well.”

The Rev. Deb Stanbury was recently ordained as Community Chaplain and Coordinator of the STAND (Street Trade Alternatives and New Directions) Program, a specialized ministry for those involved in the sex trade, at Yonge Street Mission’s Evergreen Centre for Street Youth in downtown Toronto.



Uplifting



I live in a small town in Ontario with my husband Bernard, and two beautiful children, Emille and Celeste. My career began as a theatrical costumer for the Stratford Festival, Mirvish Productions, and the National Ballet of Canada, to name a few.

However, after my son was born I wanted to be with him and decided to start a home-based business. I also felt it was important to start a business that would have a positive impact on humanity and the planet, so I came up with the idea of "Pajamas for Humanity." I have been actively interested in helping women, who have survived the atrocities of war, particularly those who had survived genocide and I was already aware of several sewing groups in countries like Guatemala and Cambodia. It was at this time that I happened to turn on the television one night, just in time to see a CBC documentary about a community centre in Rwanda that was looking for sewing contracts to



Humanity

by Johanne St. Louis

help employ a group of women, who had survived the genocide in 1994. I knew this was not a matter of coincidence but of divine intervention. God was showing me the way and all I had to do was be brave enough to trust him. That evening was the beginning of an amazing journey.

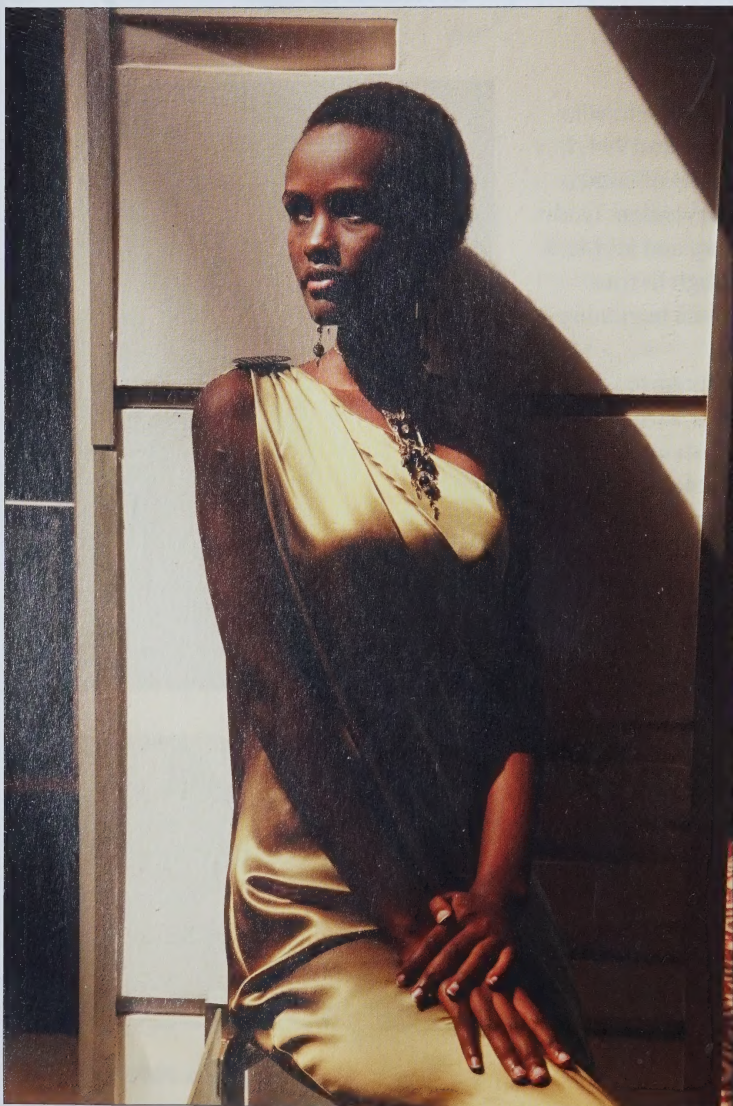
Rwanda is a small paradise in the heart of Africa. It has a tropical climate which is very lush and green. Only about the size of New Brunswick, Rwanda has a population of approximately nine million. The locals call it the land of a thousand hills and this is true. It is also known as the land of a thousand smiles and this is also very true. The people are warm and hospitable; everywhere you look there is bright vibrant colour either in the flowers or the fabrics the women wear. It's very hard to imagine that 16 years ago this paradise was hell on earth, even though the signs are still visible in the shelled buildings and the scarred people. However, the resiliency of these beautiful people is astonishing.



My first trip to Rwanda in January of 2008 was truly life changing. I began by teaching the women at a community centre in Kimironko, a suburb of Kigali, how to draft patterns and make the pajamas. It was a very humbling experience to be in the presence of these women, who

had witnessed the worst of humanity and still had the capacity to love, laugh, and continue to provide for their children even though they had lost everything, including their dignity. I decided to write a proposal on their behalf and apply to the Rwandan Government for funds

to purchase new equipment for the sewing shop. We were successful in securing funds and were able to purchase industrial machines, professional irons, and all the equipment needed to set up a professional sewing shop. I went back to Rwanda in July of the same year to receive the machines and assist with the set-up of the new equipment. My intent with this project was to train the women to work as a team and improve their skills and efficiency so that they could eventually service local clients as well as my company. Three years



later, these women are able to produce a variety of products for several local businesses and designers as well as deciding to remain a training centre.

Dreamyz Loungewear has grown and we now have our pajamas produced by another sewing group in Gisozi, a district of Kigali, which is able to service larger orders. This has been a very positive experience and we have been able to help provide employment for an even larger group of women. Around the same time I began this project, Rwanda began to raise silk worms and produce their own silk fabrics. I was able to witness the evolution of this process and I am now proud to say that we are the first company in North America to sell Rwandan silk. As a result, we are also able to help provide employment for the small farming co-ops that grow the materials which our fabrics are made from. Utexrwa, a mill that uses fair labour to produce all of their products, is where all of our fabrics are created for us. We have designed a fabric that is exclusive to Dreamyz and consists of 50% cotton and 50% silk.

Over the past five visits to Rwanda, I have met some truly wonderful and talented people. I have had several opportunities to speak at fundraising events and to be involved in various projects. There are many organizations, both Canadian and Rwandan, that are doing so much to help provide the necessities of life to

the survivors of the Rwanda genocide. I have been working with the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre to create a gift store that would also act as a distribution centre for artisan groups in Rwanda as well as help them to have access to international markets. Some of the greatest challenges for these groups revolve around communication and shipping as many do not have access to or know how to operate computers.

In August of 2010, we held the first Rwanda Fashion Week. This event showcased the work of four Rwandan designers, and six international designers from East Africa, France, and including me from Canada. The main event was held at the famous Hotel Rwanda also known as Hotel des Mille Collines, in downtown Kigali, and was truly an accomplishment for the organizers. This will become an annual event in Rwanda with the next show happening in April 2011. The event will go a long way to inspire creativity and foster this new burgeoning fashion industry. I am so proud to be a part of these beginnings and to show that with God's grace, we really can live our dreams.

Johanne St. Louis is a Canadian Fashion Designer and the owner of Dreamyz Loungewear, "A company with a dream to uplift humanity." It sells pajamas in a full range of sizes, colours, and styles for both men and women and can be found online at www.dreamyz.ca.

My Heart is in Malawi

by Mary Helen Garvin

Many years ago when I was newly-graduated nurse, Mary Whale, the secretary for Overseas Missions for the WMS, asked me if I would go to Nigeria to work. At that time, I felt too inexperienced for such a task and I declined. But the thought of going to work in Africa has always stayed in the back of my mind. Since then, the AIDS crisis emerged, and when I retired after 25 years of psychotherapy work, the opportunity to be of some use in Africa arose in my thoughts once again. Some literature review revealed to me that there was little being done to assist orphaned children with emotional and psychological issues that were part of their

lives. Efforts were being made to meet their physical needs, and while I felt I could do little about that, I might be able to train people to care for these less obvious, but very important, emotional needs.

In 2007, with the support of International Ministries and the WMS, and the invitation of the Church of Central African Presbyterian (CCAP), I went to Malawi for three months. My goal was to provide rudimentary training in counselling grieving children for the people in the villages of Domasi Presbytery. We trained 45 representatives from 20 villages and 5 churches. On my return home, with much help from an International Institute for Child



Community workers



Handing over the Manual

Rights and Development (IICRD) publication, I prepared a manual, and once again with support of the WMS, it was translated into Chechewa. This process took three years to accomplish. This past summer, once again supported by WMS, I returned to Malawi to oversee the distribution of the manual. I wanted to do some assessment of the program, some more teaching, and hopefully expand the program with the use of the manual. To do this, I needed to find a project that would include an emphasis on the emotional needs of the children.

I was fortunate to receive help from friends with Emmanuel International (EI), who provided me with the hospitality of their home, vehicles, and drivers at very reasonable costs. Without their support, I could not have met my goals.

Malawi and Canada are two different worlds. One needs to be flexible and patient in Malawi if you want to keep your blood pressure normal. Fortunately, my life experience has made me relatively flexible and patient. However, travelling to another world with a limited amount of time, and plans about how to use the time, pushes the limits of one's capacity to be flexible. The manual, which was supposed to be printed a month before my arrival, was still not in the hands of the printers. Finding out why tested my ingenuity as well as my flexibility. My first week was spent notifying the five groups of counsellors of my plans to be in their churches in the next three or four weeks. When I set out the next week, with plans to visit five churches during the week, doing half day workshops, I received notice that

“Today's orphans are tomorrow's citizens.”

“I was greatly pleased to find that each of the groups of counsellors was still working with the children in their villages after three years. Three of the groups were meeting every two weeks, and the other two once a month.”

my interpreter had been in a motor-cycle accident and could not assist me. This turned out to be a blessing for me since he sent the Rev. Collins Maganga in his stead. Rev. Maganga was an excellent interpreter, with lots of experience with children—having been a teacher for 10 years, and having worked in HIV prevention with World Vision before becoming a minister. He stayed with me in this work almost the entire time that I was there.

I was greatly pleased to find that each of the groups of counsellors was still working with the children in their villages after three years. Three of the groups were meeting every two weeks, and the other two once a month. They were able to tell me exactly how many orphans were in their villages, who the children were who were being cared for, and how many were in each age group. Only two persons we had trained were no longer involved and this was because they had moved away from the area.

I had some wonderful privileges while I was there. My dear friend,

the Rev. Blessings Mkwate, invited me to lay the cornerstone for a new church they were building. It had its humorous moments. It turned out that I was to lay a special stone weighing about three or four pounds in a hole that had been dug in the ground under where the building would be. Since the hole was on a knoll, and I do not bend as easily as I used to, the feat was not simple. Once the stone was in the hole, the pastor said that I had to hold onto it while he prayed—a long prayer. I was not sure I was going to survive the experience, but it was a lovely honour!

That same day, I was given a live chicken to take home with me. Since I had to use a taxi to get there, the driver was not keen on having this smelly creature in his car. In the end, I gave him the chicken and he felt somewhat better about it all.

During my last week there, I stayed in Blantyre with Glenn and Linda Inglis so that I could get to see some of our Presbyterian work there. What a thrill to see the club where mothers and grannies brought their

physically and mentally challenged infants and children each week so that volunteers could help the children keep some flexibility in their crippled limbs. I got to teach embroidery to some physically challenged folk at Tidzalerana, a lovely home for people who had been begging on the street in order to live. I am right-handed, but when I began to show them how to make the stitches, it turned out that all three of them had crippled right arms and hands. So this was new learning for me as I had to figure out how to embroider with my left hand!

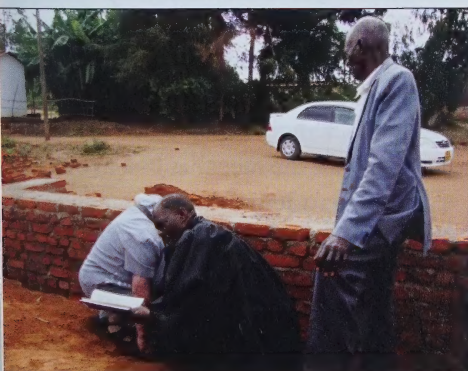
I visited wonderful Community Based Daycares in the areas around Blantyre, much different from the ones I visited in the villages. These had buildings and teachers, whereas in the villages, the children might be meeting under a tree, or in someone's

yard, or at a church building. The teachers are very creative in their use of whatever is at hand to teach the children. For example, an old battery radio in the music centre had springs where the batteries used to fit. The children could pull on the springs to make a musical sound.

Emmanuel International has invited me to return and do training with people from their Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) teams. If they can find the funding, I will go, for my heart is truly with these little children, their grannies, and other caregivers. Today's orphans are tomorrow's citizens. If Malawi is to thrive, their future citizens must not be burdened with unresolved grief issues that are bound to affect their mental health. I am excited about the possibility of returning.

“I am excited about the possibility of returning.”

ying the Stone



Community Day Care Centre



Miles and Miles of Small Steps

by Vivian Bertrand

“Running is often a time to pray and to be alone with God.”

When I was a child, my twin sister told me that I often looked like I was running in my sleep. I have always enjoyed running. I have been running races since I was 14, and now, at 39, I run local races to challenge myself. I enjoy running fast, but I've always been a mediocre runner. I have never won a race, nor have I ever run a marathon. I don't run for the competition as much as for my own small victories. Running is a way for me to find solitude and time for prayer. Like many women I know, running makes me feel good about the shape of my body and helps me not to worry as much about losing weight. I also run because I feel a sense of progress or accomplishment while doing it. My spiritual, physical, and psychological well-being depends on it.

Although I run for the small victories, I realize that it is the big victories that keep me going. I need the goal of an upcoming race or the goal to run a faster 10K. The big victories help me to get out on an icy Saturday morning in February for a long run. As a Christian, as a runner, and as a mother, I need those small victories as I run the race of life, but I also need the big victories to move forward.

As a Christian, I have big goals. I want to love as Christ loved. I want to be more Christ-like in every part of my life. I'm trying to "run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross." (Hebrews 12:1-2) I experience small spiritual victories



while running that keep me moving toward my final goal. Running is often a time to pray and to be alone with God. As I run, I often sing Christian camp songs in my head, pray, or repeat short scripture passages. Spiritual perfection is not something I will ever reach, but with each run I remind myself to focus on the steps I'm taking now to get to where I want to be.

My favourite running place where I live is a canal path with woods on either side. It stretches for miles and miles, over and under roads, beside a lake, under railway tracks, and over a boardwalk. When I run along the canal, all feels quiet. I can hear the

birds. I can listen for God. On some runs, I simply try to remind myself of the promise of God's love: "You are loved. No matter what you do. No matter what you look like. No matter what you accomplish. You are worthy of love, and you are loved." There are runs when I focus on giving thanks to God and offering my gratefulness for the day, the time alone, or the great blue heron or deer or rabbit that I see along the path. Some days, running and praying come together: a spiritual discipline as I try to stay focused on God and prayer. Once I dedicated a run to praying about one single issue that was bothering me and I ended

up running for 14.5 km. It was the farthest I had ever run at that point in my life. These small victories of praying or focusing on God help me to get closer to the big victory of being more Christ-like.

As great as the spiritual benefits of running are for me, I would not run if it were not for the many physical benefits as well. A prime reason I run is the joy of being healthy and having a fit body. I need those bigger goals, those possible victories, to motivate me, but the small victories such as the thrill of a strong, fast run or being happy today with how I look, bring me closer to living the truth that this body I have is a gift and a temple from God.

While running is physically beneficial, if I increase my distance or speed too quickly, I start to get injured. I am currently training for my first half-marathon, but three weeks ago, I began to struggle with knee pain. I had to drastically cut back my running and be more diligent about

doing strengthening, stretching, and cross training. To get back to my previous distance and weekly mileage, I am running slower and taking shorter strides. It feels like I'm taking baby steps instead of fast, long strides. Today, I ran 11 km with no knee pain. It is a small victory on my way to 21 km and reminds me that it takes months of small victories to attain a big victory like running a half-marathon.

Running also keeps me grounded, better able to deal with all the aspects of a busy family. On days that I start with a run I often feel more joyful. As my husband will attest, I'm more likely to be grumpy on a day when I haven't run in the morning. For me, I'm sure it is partly getting outside and the spiritual effects of running, but it is also the feeling of accomplishment after a good run. It helps me to feel good about myself and, consequently, I'm better able to focus on others. This is especially true in my parenting. When I run, I am better able to focus on my children because

“It takes small victories—like
to reach those big victories

I am less preoccupied with myself.

Sometimes as a parent I find it difficult to appreciate the small, daily victories. Before having children, and when I used to work full-time, I felt the satisfaction of a Friday well-deserved after completing a week of hard work. My efforts and productivity produced results that the professional world recognized. Washing dishes, doing groceries, preparing meals, cleaning the bathroom, and doing laundry, do not give me the same feeling of productivity or accomplishment. I love my children immensely. They are beautiful, delightful people. I enjoy spending time with them, but the never ending housework can get me down. I know that my work at home is critical in the lives of my children (and my husband), but still I have to remind myself that each day of parenting is a small victory. Small victories, such as preparing a healthy dinner or toilet training my daughter, are indeed victories. My worries about whether or not my son will excel in

high school need to be replaced with my focus on today's victories as I help him do his Grade 1 math homework.

One December day last year, at the end of a long week and after a difficult day of parenting, I felt an urgent need to get out of our tiny apartment. At 5:35 p.m.—as soon as my husband was within steps of our home—I ran. I needed to get away. As the sun set, I yelled my prayers at God, I cried, and I ran hard. By the time I returned to my family, I felt spiritually liberated, physically refreshed, and mentally capable of facing my life with strength.

No big victories come without many small victories along the way. As I run the course that God has set before me, I have to remind myself that life is mostly made up of small victories. I yearn to be more Christ-like, more physically fit, and a mom who brings joy to each small victory; however, it takes small victories—like a prayerful run tomorrow—to reach those big victories one small step at a time.

prayerful run tomorrow—
one small step at a time.”

Soul Care

by Sabrina Ingram

Instinctively, women are caregivers. We care for children, husbands, and even parents. Many work in caring professions; others are available to friends, family, and acquaintances that need a shoulder to lean on. Some women care for the world by their involvement in mission or by making their political voices heard. Why we even “tend” to our gardens. With all

this caring for others, there is little time for us to care for ourselves. Sometimes we etch out time to pamper our bodies with a pedicure or a massage, and while this also soothes our souls, we rarely consider what care our souls actually need. When we do remember that our soul needs tending we either don’t know where to begin or we don’t have the time.

Exercise #1

Soul care begins with discovering you are a beloved child of God. You deserve to be cared for as much as anyone for whom you care. Read Matthew 3: 13–17 several times; notice this event takes place in Jesus’ life prior to his ministry. Jesus hasn’t worked for God’s approval; it is given out of love and grace.

Imagine you have gone down to the river to be baptized by John. Envision the setting, the river banks, the slow moving murky water where John, the wild man, waits for you. What do you hear? See? Smell? Go from the shore of the Jordan into the water and feel the coolness of the river and the heaviness of your clothes. Imagine your baptism. Water flows over you. You come up from the water, dripping wet and chilly. You hear the words, “You are my beloved daughter, I’m pleased with you!” How do you feel? What do you think? How do you respond? Who in your life incarnates this message of God to you?

In some ways we are like the Benedictine monks whose spiritual rule was abbreviated to “pray and work.” Theirs was a rigorous life of service. Time was filled with responsibilities and self-sacrifice was highly valued. Sound familiar? Perhaps you would make a good Benedictine monk! At the same time, there’s much of value in that rule. There’s connection with God through prayer, the honesty of earning your living, the art of working with your hands, and the humility of serving others in community. Jesus repeatedly called his followers to acts of service and self denial (cf. Matthew 10:38; 16:24;

19:30; John 15:13). While giving of ourselves to others is work, it’s also filled with challenges that shape and expand our souls. How then does our giving become life sucking instead of soul nurturing? I’d venture this happens first, because we don’t know how precious we are in the eyes of God—we can’t accept that “God loves me.” Secondly, self-giving isn’t a moment-by-moment action intentionally done in the presence of God. When this kind of prayer is lacking, we lose our sense of communion with God which grounds us in love. Grace goes out the window. We feel God (or the church, or our own inner voices

Exercise #2

Find a photo of yourself as a child. Describe this child’s spirit. Read Matthew 19:13–15. Once again, use all your senses and your imagination to place the child in the photo (yourself) in this scene. Watch the other children going forward to sit on Jesus’ knee and chat with him. He smiles at them and blesses them. Do you want his special blessing too? There are big people around you, keeping you away from Jesus. Looking up you see the faces of people in your childhood, who kept you from being blessed. Who are they? What have they done to you? How have they hurt you? How have they deprived you? What do you feel? Jesus pushes through this group of people; he’s angry at them for keeping you away and tells them to move. He comes to you, picks you up, and swings you around. He takes your hand and you walk back with him and sit down beside him. How do you feel? What do you say to him? How does he respond? After you’ve finished talking, Jesus lifts you on to his knee and blesses you. What are his words of blessing to you? What do you feel? Where in your body do you feel it? What is this feeling about? He puts you down, tousles your hair, and tells you to go play and have fun.

or even our ego) expects it of us. We make great and greater demands on ourselves and we try to earn approval. Before we know it, we are crushed under the weight of our self doubt and selfless deeds. We may be caring for others, but we are killing ourselves. We need another path to give us balance.

So, we need to act and take care of ourselves. Exercises 1 and 2 (included with this article) help us to begin to know God's love for us and to find that balance. Do each one daily starting with the first one; stay with it for an extended period of time (a week, a month, as long as needed). This isn't a race. Trust yourself to know when you are ready to move on. Repeat the process with the second exercise.

Our souls thrive on the blessings of God and the lightness that comes with God's gift of play. When was the last time you played and had fun? Play looks like a lot of things and is different for each of us. What things make you happy and make your soul sing? Is it laughter-filled dinner parties with friends? Walking in the woods? Skiing? Dancing? Making music? Making love? When did you last build an indoor tent with your kids and pretend you were gypsies? Or stick your feet in the water and splash? Or take a drive in the country? Or play in the snow? Or spend an afternoon playing a board

game or making cupcakes with your grandchildren? God gave us the gift of life, some amazing people and a whole big world to go and enjoy. Play is the re-creation God uses to refresh our souls.

Does that seem frivolous? Wrong? Let me tell you guilt is not a spiritual practice. There are many terrible things in the world, and there are also many wonderful things. As Thich Naht Han said, "It is not enough to suffer, we must also learn to smile." Ignatius of Loyola strongly suggested that at the end of every day we do a review by asking ourselves, "What drew me close to God today?" and "What moved me away from God?" He called these movements our "consolations" and "desolations."

Consolations are



things that give us a deep sense of inner peace and unity with God. Desolations are the inner turmoil and disease produced when we are out of sync with God. Ignatius proposed we trail these movements over a period of time and do the things that bring us closer to God more often. While these may include service to others and care for our world, they also include the enjoyment of creation, creativity, and play.

We often think that consolations come only from long sessions of vigorous prayer, serious worship services, and the rigorous study of scripture. And they can. But when we're honest, sometimes another tedious service with a boring sermon and dirge-like hymns move us away from God.

Some may object, "That's what church is!"

It's not

supposed to be enjoyable." Perhaps if we referred to worship as "the play of God's people" instead of "the work of God's people" it would be quite different. Is it possible for these key spiritual practices to be less like torture and more like fun? Isn't being with God a joyful time? What if prayer were more like dancing in God's presence than ramming the gates of heaven? We all have an invitation to the great wedding reception in heaven and worship is the rehearsal party! It's a celebration in anticipation of a great day that is coming soon. The Bible is an adventure book of all the escapades of our mothers and fathers in the faith, a story of humanity's quest for home, and the profound telling of a hero's love for his people. Our faith is meant to give us abundant life and abundant life nourishes our souls.

We care for our souls when we care for others and when we can rest from caring for others. We care for our souls by reconnecting with Jesus who loves us, welcomes us, and blesses us. We care for our souls by doing the things that bring us closer to God and give us joy.

We care for our souls when we are excited by worship and prayer and the great story of God's grace. We care for our souls when we "Pray and Play." May God help you to do these things and to take care.

Reviews

Wangari's Trees of Peace

by Jeanette Winter

reviewed by Amy Fonseca

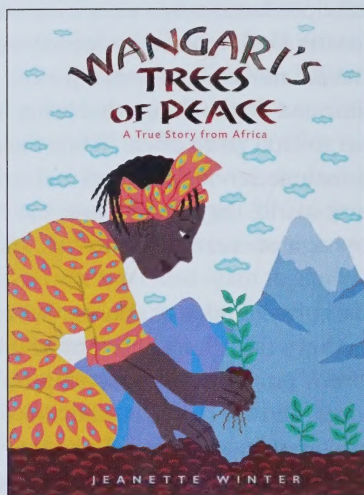
Wangari's Trees of Peace is the true story of Wangari Maathai from Kenya. Wangari was an intelligent young woman who received a scholarship to study in America. Upon returning to Kenya, she found her country barren and on the verge of becoming a desert due to the excessive deforestation that had occurred there. Wangari wept to see this and began to change things by planting nine trees in her own backyard. She then set up nurseries and paid other women to plant and take care of trees.

Despite opposition, and the belief government officials had that women could not succeed, Wangari's movement produced results and in 2004, thirty million trees had been planted.

This children's book is evocative and relevant. In an age when we are depleting the earth's resources at an incredible rate, and the norm is to consume and throw away, this book brings a reminder of what will be lost if we continue on this trajectory. Particularly relevant to children ages 11–14 are themes of standing up for what is right and gender bias.

Also present is the theme that, "We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own—indeed, to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty, and wonder" (from Wangari's acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize, 2004). This theme is particularly poignant, as is the concept that taking care of the Earth will produce many benefits for society.

Jeanette Winter has done an incredible job in writing and illustrating this book. The illustrations are particularly beautiful and full of meaning. This is definitely a book for the bookshelf.



One Hen

by Katie Smith Milway

illustrated by Eugenie Fernandes

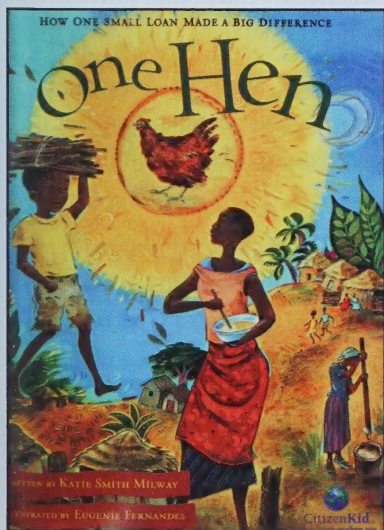
I picked this book off the shelf of the children's section of my local library one week because I wanted to read it. I thought my then four-year-old, would find it too long and wordy. I was wrong. He loved it and it was a great way for him to learn a little more about helping others. Though I know that this book is not just a book for the young—it's a great book for study and discussion for children and for all ages, even adults!

It is the story of Kojo, a young boy in Ghana who quits school after his father dies so he can help to collect wood with his mother to sell at the market. His entire village is poor, but they have an idea. They will all save a little money in order to give one family a loan. That family can then start a small business. With their business, they will repay the loan, allowing another family to get a loan. When it is Kojo's mother's turn to receive the loan, she has a few pennies left and Kojo asks if he can have it. He buys a hen and plans to sell the eggs.

Slowly Kojo's egg money grows. After two months, he pays his mother back, and after four months he has enough money saved to buy another hen. After a year, Kojo has 25 hens and soon he returns to school! Eventually, Kojo becomes

a successful business man, employing many others, and he helps others with small business loans.

This is a delightful story with a great teaching component. The pictures are also wonderful. This is also a delightful story of success, one that happens time and time again in small villages all around the world. The Presbyterian Church in Canada, through PWS&D, provides small business loans as part of their work. For more information on how PWS&D is helping people around the world with small business loans visit: <http://presbyterian.ca/pwsd/programs/smallbusiness>.



Praying in the Messiness of Life—7 Ways to Renew your Relationship with God

by Linda Douty

Linda Douty is a long-time Spiritual Director and she understands that many of us wish we had a more meaningful prayer life, but we just don't know how to get started. Perhaps you had a meaningful prayer life, but something in your life changed—the birth of a child, a career change, or becoming caregiver to a spouse or parent.

Well, leave the guilt behind, and get creative! Douty gives us tools for integrating meaningful prayer into our day. Douty gave several ideas which I could relate too. I already pray when I go for a run, but Douty suggested a companion walk, almost like having 'that invisible friend you spoke to as a child' along with you. What a wonderful way to consider Christ, my companion on my run.

Douty also suggests the Benedictine practice of praying with the scriptures. This is another form of prayer that I find particularly beneficial. Allow your devotional time to truly become a complete time of prayer in the presence of God.

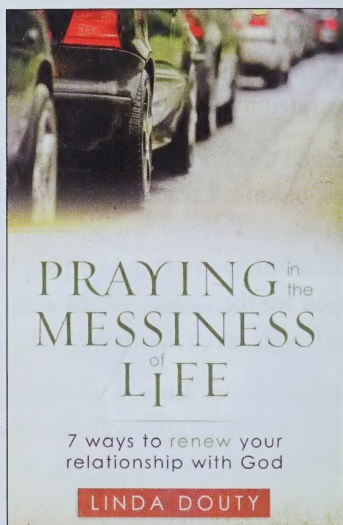
Douty also has suggestions for praying with senses, the mind, and your surroundings. Obviously, different styles of prayer will appeal to different personalities, but I expect that we all might learn one or two new prayer approaches from this book. There is great diversity in her approaches.

To help you work through the book, each chapter does include some great reflection questions, and there are suggestions for using this book in a group.

Writing to God—40 Days of Praying with My Pen

by Rachel G. Hackenberg

When many of us sit down to pray, we sit down with nothing before us. Yet, for many of us, this becomes a distracted time. We find ourselves making lists for groceries, or perhaps even nodding off. If this is you, perhaps you should try praying with your pen. Writing to God, can help you get started.



Each of the 40 sessions, begins with a prayer written by Hackenberg. I loved the poetry of her prayers and the honesty of her language—her first prayer is entitled, Caffeine—though I did have to get over the beauty of her prayers, lest I feel inadequate in my own writings. Following her prayer, is a short biblical passage and a question to motivate your own writing.

Although this book was motivated by the 40 days of Lent, as an Easter people, it would be suitable for use during any Season.

KAIROS Cross-Canada Action

Support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Between February and June, churches and other groups from across the country will be preparing banners signalling their support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In June, KAIROS will travel across the country by train to gather the banners, and then use them in public events in Ottawa to demonstrate that Canadians want our government to implement this important international agreement.

Your congregation or WMS group can get involved and submit their own banner:

- To demonstrate your church support for the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- To be part of the cross-Canada KAIROS “Roll with the Declaration” journey.
- To help show the Government of Canada that there are many Canadians who care deeply about Indigenous rights and want to see the declaration implemented as a next step towards right relations.

KAİROS provides great information for making the banner, including a half- or full-day banner making event. What a great way to bring your group together to learn and get active! Visit www.kaïroscanada.org/roll for more information.

ROLL WITH THE DECLARATION:

KAIROS Cross-Canada Action, June 2011

Part of the KaiROS "The Land, Our Life" Campaign to End the War on the Environment

HOW YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY CAN MAKE A BANNER

It's time to get involved in the KaiROS "The Land, Our Life" Campaign to End the War on the Environment. This year, we're asking you to join us in a cross-Canada action on June 20, 2011, to demand that the federal government end the war on the environment and protect the land, water, and air that we all depend on for our health and well-being.

Why Make a Banner?

There are many reasons why you should make a banner for the June 20 action. First, it's a great way to get involved in the campaign and to let the government and the public know that you care about the environment. Second, it's a great way to show your support for the campaign and to let the government and the public know that you care about the environment. Third, it's a great way to get involved in the campaign and to let the government and the public know that you care about the environment.

How to Make a Banner

There are many ways to make a banner for the June 20 action. You can make a banner for your community, your workplace, or your school. You can make a banner for a specific issue, such as the protection of the environment or the health of the land, water, and air. You can make a banner for a specific location, such as a park or a river. You can make a banner for a specific group of people, such as a family or a community.

Where to Get a Banner

You can get a banner for the June 20 action from the KaiROS website (www.kairos.ca) or from a local KaiROS chapter. You can also make your own banner at home or at work.

What to Write on the Banner

There are many things you can write on the banner for the June 20 action. You can write a message about the environment, the health of the land, water, and air, or the importance of protecting the environment. You can write a message about the June 20 action or the KaiROS "The Land, Our Life" Campaign. You can write a message about your community, your workplace, or your school.

How to Use the Banner

You can use the banner for the June 20 action in many ways. You can hold it up at a demonstration or a rally. You can display it in your home or at work. You can use it as a backdrop for a photo or a video. You can use it to decorate a stage or a podium.

More Information

For more information about the June 20 action or the KaiROS "The Land, Our Life" Campaign, visit the KaiROS website (www.kairos.ca) or contact a local KaiROS chapter. You can also contact the KaiROS National Office at (416) 593-8888 or info@kairos.ca.

Join the KaiROS "The Land, Our Life" Campaign

Join the KaiROS "The Land, Our Life" Campaign today! Sign up for the June 20 action and get involved in the campaign to end the war on the environment. Visit the KaiROS website (www.kairos.ca) or contact a local KaiROS chapter for more information.

Thank You

Thank you for your support of the KaiROS "The Land, Our Life" Campaign. We appreciate your commitment to the environment and to the health of the land, water, and air. We look forward to seeing you at the June 20 action and to working with you to end the war on the environment.

Footer

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Mission in Action

Denise Van Wissen
Nicaragua

Hello and warm greetings!

I write once again from Nicaragua, and we're very happy to be back after three years in Guatemala and a few months in Canada.

We feel blessed to have quickly found a suitable house to rent, just a five-minute walk from Nelson's Mom's place. Yes, it's nice to have family and babysitters so close by. We sure missed that in Guatemala! We're in a 'gated community,' which wasn't something we'd planned on, but after hearing a lot about increases

in crime it didn't seem like a bad idea. It's nice to be able to walk over to the park without worry of thieves and such.

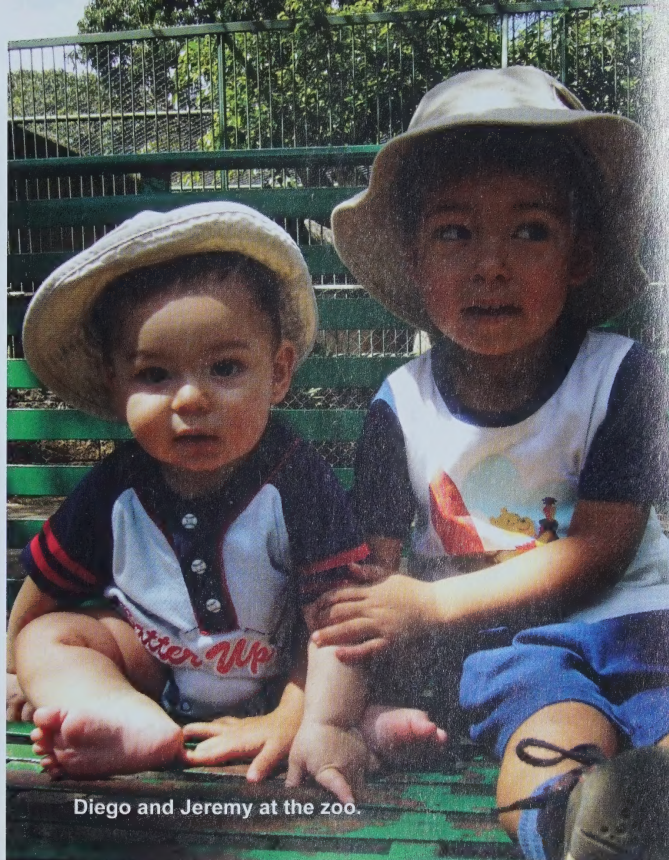
From the front garden, Jeremy loves to watch the garbage truck (pick-up is three times a week!) and the school buses. There's a large water tank on a tower in the corner of the back yard, and it's already proved itself useful since the water's gone off a number of times. We're lucky to have several fruit trees, including bitter orange, which is currently producing and makes up for the current scarcity of lemons. Acidic fruit juice is an essential ingredient in Nicaraguan cooking so Nelson always likes to



have lemons around. Of the two mango trees, the one that produces is a late bloomer, but the boys enjoy mangoes from Grandma, and she has an avocado tree. Jeremy (2 ½ years) has decided that he likes avocado again and Diego has now tried it and likes it too.

In spite of all the re-settling tasks (everything from the process of importing our possessions and the PCC vehicle to renewing my residence and getting the boys' Nicaraguan citizenship), I'm trying to find time to enjoy my maternity leave with the boys. I've also been keeping busy preparing for the Youth in Mission group, which has been a good way of getting back into the work groove.

In July, I'm looking forward to returning to work at SOYNICA, the Soya Association of Nicaragua, specializing in Nutrition Education and I've been meeting with my boss and other colleagues to talk about the work that awaits me! I'll write more about the work at SOYNICA in my next update. Nelson is back to his old job of dry walling and has often had to work 16-hour days, but with



so much unemployment here we can only be thankful.

A few weeks after arriving, while we were waiting for our furniture to come, we spent a weekend in Ocotal (this town, in the North of the country near the Honduras border, might sound familiar since I lived and worked—and met Nelson there!). Jeremy enjoyed playing with his cousins and Diego got to meet his great-grandma, Gloria.

Baby Diego just turned eight months and has been pulling up for at least a month now so I fear he'll soon



Denise, Nelson, Jeremy, and Diego

be walking! Jeremy loves playing with his baby brother, but enjoys going ‘by himself’ to Grandma’s. He seems to prefer to answer me in Spanish when I speak to him in English, but apparently this is how it works with bilingual kids.

I write this on the 100th Anniversary of International Women’s Day, and send a special hello to all the women at the National Presbyterian Women’s Gathering! We look forward to hearing about it.

Mike and Debbie Burns Malawi

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has sent The Rev. Michael Burns, and his wife Debbie, to serve the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Malawi (CCAP). Mike is an associate minister at St. James Church, helping to meet the CCAP’s need for qualified ministers. Debbie is looking forward to discerning a position in Malawi that will allow her

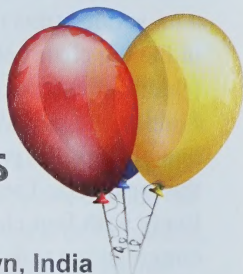
to use her God-given gifts in ways and areas that fit with what is needed by the people there.

This is a posting from their blog after their first few weeks in Malawi:

It was certainly a busy weekend of ministry at St James and I am not really even working full-time yet! I co-officiated at my first wedding on Saturday morning with my colleague, Rev. Songola, and he assured me that the next one would be all mine! The wedding was originally scheduled for 8:00 a.m., but a presbytery meeting was called for 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, so Rev. Songola simply called the families and told them their wedding was now at 7:00 a.m. Can you hear the cries of outrage if a Canadian clergy person called a Canadian family and told them their wedding was moved up by an hour with only two days notice?

I arrived at the church at 6:45 a.m. and there seemed to be very few people about. Rev. Songola informed me that the family had called and told him that they would be ready at 7:30 a.m.—the wedding ceremony started at 7:45. Malawian weddings in the CCAP follow a similar order to PCC weddings with most of the same elements. The only difference is the entire marriage ceremony is conducted first and then the couple sit and listens to the sermon. After the sermon and a prayer, the register is signed and it becomes official. The wedding party then exits the church,

Overseas Staff Birthdays



May

24 – Pauline Brown, India

June

1 – Louise Gamble, Taiwan

26 – Ann Young

July

5 – Murray Garvin, Taiwan

led by the minister, and a few pictures are taken with the minister before the clergy take their leave.

Immediately after the wedding, Rev. Songola and I drove to our presbytery meeting which was an executive meeting to prepare for the annual general meeting of the full presbytery the following Saturday. We had 70 ministers and elders crammed into a small classroom shoulder to shoulder. The meeting went all morning until we broke for lunch at 12:30 p.m. and then resumed at 1:30 p.m. The Rev. Ed Hoekstra and I left early at 2:30 p.m., but the meeting went on for another two hours.

On Sunday morning, I attended the 8:00 a.m. English service. I was not preaching or convening the service, but was acting as the moderator as Rev. Songola had done at the 6:00

a.m. and would do again at the 10:00 a.m. service (this means that I had to sit in the big chair behind the communion table for the service). It was “Revival” Sunday and the evangelism committee had planned the program and supplied the preachers. The service was very lively with four choirs and then the congregation sang three praise songs. During the second praise song, the lyrics were about “dancing for the Lord” and the whole congregation was swaying, clapping, and singing. Suddenly, Rev. Songola ran up the chancel steps and grabbed both my hands in his and said, “I hope it is alright, but we are going to dance!” To the congregation’s delight we danced for the entire song! All in all a very enjoyable worship service that gave new meaning to, “dancing for the Lord.”



The Rev. Mike Burns
and The Rev. Maxwell
Songola



The WMS ... Did you Know?

Although I had been involved in the WMS from my childhood, attending occasional meetings with mother, I knew very little of the history of the WMS. I am still far from being an expert, but one of the first things I did after applying for the position as the Editor of *Glad Tidings*, was to read, *Certain Women Amazed Us, The Women's Missionary Society, Their Story, 1864-2002*, by Lois Klempa and Rosemary Doran. It is an interesting history of the WMS and I encourage you to read it if you have not already done so. But, just to get you started, here is a little on the early beginning of your WMS.

The WMS began, as did many women's organizations, in the mid to

late 1800s. And, as you can imagine, the life of a woman was much different then. As a woman you could not vote. If you were married, work outside the home was frowned upon or forbidden, and if you did work, you would not be allowed to work in many 'male' occupations. And of course, ordination to both the ministry of word and sacrament or to the eldership was out of the question, meaning women had no vote in any court in the church.

It is in this climate, that women began to organize themselves. It seems in the early years, clergy were actively involved in these groups. They attended meetings, provided the opening and closing prayers, and spoke openly as to what projects the



G-4887-FC

A group of women mailing the *Foreign Missionary Tidings*.

women could support. It seemed that the women's primary responsibility was to raise funds through soirées, the sales of work, and collection. However, even in the early groups, the women did sometimes refuse the suggestions of the clergy, and before long, women began to take over the leadership, planning, and studies.

It is interesting to note that the importance of the WMS was felt almost right from the start. In March 1864, the Montreal Ladies' French Mission Auxiliary was formed, but it only planned to take on a short-term mandate, so they stopped meeting in 1866. However, the synod requested their help in 1869, so they resumed their work, but after the completion of another few projects, they once again

stopped meeting until synod requested their help again in 1871. In 1882, they became the Montreal Woman's Missionary Society and broadened their focus to include home and foreign mission.

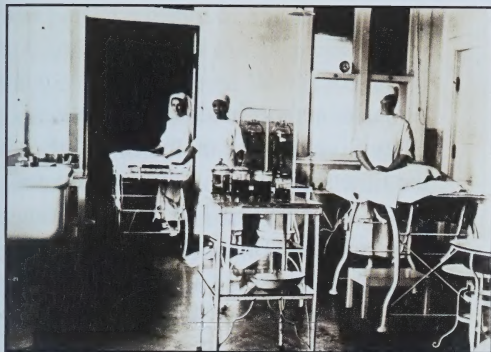
It was in 1876 that the Woman's Foreign Mission Society began, with their first monthly meeting being held at Knox Church, Toronto. They struggled for their first years and there was a general fear that money given to them would not go to the church ... we still hear these rumblings today! Again, they were faced with the challenge that most often they were fundraisers while the men decided what the funds were used for. Even from the early years, they had a strong focus on educating



Miss Lucy Margaret Baker with a school group.



Elizabeth Hope Mitchell and Helen Bone who were nurses during the Klondike Gold Rush, Atlin, British Columbia.



Operating room in McKay Memorial Hospital



Women packing bales of supplies.

their members on mission, even hand copying letters from missionaries to send to groups for their information. They also had a strong focus on India, their first and most important mission field, Formosa (Taiwan), and work with Aboriginal people.

The Women's Home Mission Society was begun in 1903 after concerns were raised for the new settlers in the Northwest of Canada. Interestingly, even after being named the *Women's Home Missionary Society*, one of their first decisions was to include men in their membership though it seemed this was met with limited success. Their main focus

was mission hospitals, education, and Christian work.

Our current Women's Missionary Society began on May 15, 1914, and was an amalgamation of the Woman's Missionary Society, Montreal; the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society; and the Women's Home Missionary Society.

As well, we have a close relationship with the Atlantic Mission Society, formerly the Women's Missionary Society, Eastern Division. Its history dates back to 1825!

Photos are courtesy of The Presbyterian Archives.

The motto of the newly formed
 Women's Missionary Society ...
The World for Christ.

In the Society

PRESBYTERIAL

Westminster Presbyterian met for their 97th Annual Meeting on February 16 at St. Andrews-Newton Church, Surrey, BC. The theme for the day was, Go, Tell ... Everywhere. The Rev. Geof Jay led worship, reading Matthew 28: 16–20. He gave illustrations of how we might “go and tell” and reminded us that God does not call the equipped but equips the called. An offering was taken for the Tidzalerana project in Malawi.

Forty women from 10 churches answered the roll call, and guest, the Rev. Mary Fontaine, director of the Hummingbird Ministry, was welcomed. The Hummingbird Ministry is an outreach of the Presbytery of Westminster to the First Nations People.

After a short business meeting, Betty Siverns gave an overview of the time she spent in Taiwan last year where her husband Ted was a visiting scholar at the Tainan Theological College. After showing a map of Taiwan and telling us about the geography and demographics of the country, Betty gave a very interesting talk on the customs, including religion, church, food, and weather.

Barbara Marshall gave a moving In Memoriam for four women of the Presbyterian, who had died since the last Annual General Meeting.

After a delicious lunch served by the ladies of St. Andrews-Newton, President Sheila Jakus introduced the afternoon speaker, Jean Grove. Jean

Westminster Presbyterian, in British Columbia, included 15 Izzy dolls, like the ones, shown here in their latest parcels of knitted goods going overseas. Anyone who likes to knit and has some spare wool can easily make one in an evening. As you can see, no two are alike!



was part of a group of 35, who went to Cambodia under the auspices of the Central Reformed World Relief Committee to help build 20 houses for the Tabitha Foundation, an organization which teaches basic healthcare and nutrition to women and gives micro loans to start cottage industries. Each individual provided \$1000 towards the cost of a house.

A report on **London Presbyterial** 97th Annual Meeting at Dutton Knox-St. Andrew's Presbyterian Churches, was featured in *The Chronicle* newspaper on January 27. The highlights from the newspaper article included:

- The theme for the day was Make a Joyful Noise.
- The Rev. Theresa MacDonald-Lee gave a report from Camp Kintail and invited everyone to Cake by the Lake on June 28.
- Guest speaker, the Rev. Patricia Shaver spoke of her relationship with Romania, including eight trips in the last 10 years. Recently, she had the privilege of preaching in four Hungarian Reformed churches.

St. Andrew's, Niagara on the Lake, was the venue for the 60th Annual Meeting of **Niagara Presbyterial**. President, Joan Weaver, welcomed members and guests and constituted the meeting with prayer. Helen McLeish, from St. Andrew's WMS, welcomed everyone and gave

Exciting things are happening in the Lower Mainland!

Sarah Kim has been invited to a Han-Ca Presbytery seminar on March 21–22 to encourage interest in the WMS.

Sarah Kim, Paul Ndukwe, and Sherry Bailey will be the speakers at the Synodical on March 23–24.

CGIT is alive and well at Whalley Church, where 12–18 girls meet weekly.

A presbytery-wide seminar—Comings and Goings: the Rhythms of a Missional Congregation—will be held at Coquitlam Church on March 5.

The Asian Christ Church has a TV program, Way of Life, led in several languages to reach out to the South East Asian people living here.

St. John's Church is planning a reading of the entire Bible from April 27 to May 7.

-Ann Friesen

a short history of the church and the WMS group. This was the first time St. Andrew's has hosted a Presbyterial Annual Meeting.

Rev. Barb McGale, minister of St. Andrew's, conducted a communion and worship service, giving a message



Rev. Gordon Williams and Mrs. Joan Weaver, Presbyterian President, in front of a display at the Niagara Presbyterian Annual Meeting.

appropriate to our theme of Healing and Reconciliation. Once again, Joan Weaver designed and painted a lovely cover for our program and our annual report book, including a cross, a braid of sweet grass, and an eagle feather.

Gail Opie introduced our guest speaker, the Rev. Gordon Williams, a member of the Peguis First Nation in Manitoba and chair of the Residential Schools Survivor Committee of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Mr. Williams spoke of his interesting life, and expressed his gratitude to the WMS for the education he received at Birtle Residential School. He also spoke of the toll that

residential school experiences have taken on many former students and their families.

Lunch was provided by the Women's Fellowship of St. Andrew's and both morning and afternoon sessions began with hymn sings led by Donna Bachur and Margaret Rice. The Rev. Anne Hibbs conducted a meaningful memorial service and installed the officers.

We also had three ladies from the Niagara Chapter of Native Women set up a display in the church hall and lead "Talking" or "Sharing" Circles. One circle used a sacred eagle feather and the other a "Talking Stone."

These objects were passed around the circle from left to right allowing everyone an opportunity to speak. We had no problem using the allotted 60 minutes as we shared our thoughts and questions.

-Hazel McGraw

East Toronto Presbyterial held their Annual General Meeting at Knox Presbyterian Church, Agincourt, on Saturday, February 26, 2011. The theme was God of Justice and Compassion. Twenty-eight members registered, despite a snowstorm.

The worship opened with the singing of Brother, Sister, Let Me Serve You, followed by a reflection by outgoing President, Marjorie Ross, based on Micah 6:8. The offering was taken after singing, Make Me a Channel of Your Peace.

Incoming President, The Rev. Priscilla Anderson, introduced the guest speaker, The Rev. Heather Jones, who spoke very movingly about the issue of human trafficking. Heather's presentation dealt with the private member's bill by Joy Smith, MP for Kildonan-St. Paul in Manitoba, which sought to amend the Criminal Code to include a minimum prison sentence of five years for offences involving trafficking of persons under 18 years

of age. The bill received good support with more than 14,000 people signing petitions that were circulated throughout Canada.

Heather also spoke about a conference she attended in Ottawa while she was serving as interim editor of *Glad Tidings*. She heard from Timea Nagy, a Hungarian who answered an advertisement in the Budapest newspaper for a summer job in Canada. Upon arrival at the airport, she had her travel documents taken from her and she was forced to dance in a strip club. Timea wrote a book about her experience, entitled *Walk With Me, A Memoir of a Sex Slave Worker*. Heather finished her address on a positive note, saying that 50 victims have been rescued in the past 10 months since that book was published.

Reports were received and approved followed by a brief book review. The Rev. Lynda Reid conducted the installation of officers followed by the benediction and grace, and we then



The officers of the Huron Perth Missionary Society 2011.

enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared by the women of Knox.

-Gladys Stover

A Future and A Hope (Jeremiah 29:11–13) was the theme of the 129th Annual Meeting of **Lindsay Presbyterian** on January 26, 2011. Hosted by the Knox Gamebridge Ladies, about 30 women were greeted with hot coffee and muffins at registration.

After a hearty hymn sing led by Blanche Simpson and Helen Torrey, Joanne Lambert welcomed the group on behalf of Knox Gamebridge. The opening worship was led by Sheila Mayville and Betty Irving of Knox Church, Bobcaygeon.

The reports were duly read and accepted and the new business was brought forward. We were all encouraged to attend the Look in—Shout Out conference for women and our Spring Fellowship Meeting.

Following a delightful lunch, we were taken on a tour of Israel through the eyes of Sheila Mayville of Bobcaygeon. Assisted by her husband, Philip, we saw PowerPoint photos of their trip. We could feel the presence of Jesus on our tour. The places he spoke, the towns he visited, and the general beauty of the land made us all feel we were there too, following along with the crowds.

The Rev. Dr. Lynda Reid was present to install our 2011 executive and give us a few words of encouragement.

The annual meeting of **Brockville Presbyterian** met at Knox Presbyterian Church, Morrisburg, on January 25. After the Rev. Ed Charleton greeted us in the parking lot, and a coffee klatch, Catherine Blatch, President, welcomed us.¹ The Morrisburg group presented a skit on the day's theme, Refugee and Strangers, for opening worship. It featured Bible people that were in similar situations to current refugees. Betty Crerar also led a Bible study on the theme.

After lunch, our guest speakers, Keith Smith and Ray Pageni, were introduced. Ray, and his family, is a refugee from Zimbabwe. Smith and Pageni met on a Canadian Foodgrains Bank in Zimbabwe where Pageni guided the group. Pageni inquired about the process of obtaining refugee status in Canada and community and local politicians assisted with the application. Pageni did say that is was difficult to leave family in Zimbabwe, but it was not difficult to leave a country with 95% unemployment, hunger, poverty, uncontrolled inflation, cholera, HIV/AIDS, and poor government. He did credit Doctors Without Borders, Christian churches, and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank for improving life for millions in Zimbabwe through improving soil and providing food.

-Donna Wilson

The Annual Meeting of the **Presbytery of Lanark-Renfrew** took



Isabel Patterson, Treasurer of Knox North Easthope WMS, just turned 90.

place in Renfrew Presbyterian Church on January 29, 2011. The theme was In Loving Partnership. President Lottie Sutherland welcomed everyone and led the WMS purpose and the constitutional prayer. The Rev. Alison Sharp, minister at Renfrew, welcomed everyone and Joan Hilliard, the Synodical President for Quebec-Eastern Ontario, brought greetings. The Almonte WMS led the devotions based on 1 Corinthians 1-13. Arnprior WMS led the In Memoriam service and Westport led The Seasons of Prayer.

Christine Ball, Regional Staff, led an interesting Bible Study. The theme was Partners in Love based on Paul's

President Itinerary

May 18

CNOB Synodical Annual Meeting, Richmond Hill

WMS Annual Council Meeting, Richmond Hill

May 19-23

Presbyterian National Women's Gathering, Richmond Hill

June 5-9

General Assembly, London

June 27-29

Detention Centre, Montreal

Letter to Philemon. Dancing, listening, communication, co-operation, respect, and compromise between partners was observed. Partnerships can be challenging and Christine reminded us that ministry is a team effort.

The Renfrew ladies served a delicious hot lunch after which the afternoon session began. The guest speaker was Audrie Cossar, who gave a very informative talk on her visit to the Cariboo Ministries. She was very impressed by the work done by the Webbers and John and Shannon Bell-Wyninga. Business and adoption of reports followed and the meeting closed with prayer.

1 For those who may have not heard the term before, a coffee klatch is a social time over a cup of coffee.

Forward in Faith

In Forward in Faith, I have been trying to feature some of the funds and the ongoing work of the WMS. In this issue, I would like to introduce you to the Rev. Sarah Travis, a minister in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. I have asked Sarah to describe how the Sam Travis-Miller Memorial Fund was set up and what work it does.

Sam was born while I was the Associate Minister at Knox, Guelph. Just before his arrival, we had the privilege of hosting Pauline Brown in our home. She and Wilma Welsh (who was also on staff at Knox, Guelph), shared with us their great love for the Bhil Christians in Central India. We learned about the important work of the Jobat Christian Hospital, and the shortage of financial and medical resources in that region.

In celebration of Sam's birth, we asked the congregation to make contributions toward the purchase of some neonatal equipment for the Jobat hospital. On the very day that we learned that the equipment was installed and dedicated in the Jobat hospital, Sam was rushed to Guelph General Hospital with a profoundly life-threatening (but unidentified) illness. As Paul and I helplessly looked on as the doctors fought to save his life, we remembered those children on the other side of the world, who did not have access to this calibre of medical care. The churches of Vindhya Satpura prayed for us and supported us with cards and messages through the months of Sam's illness.

Sam died on his third birthday, October 7, 2007. As we struggled through those first heartbreaking hours, we had many decisions to make. One of the first decisions, and certainly the easiest, was to ask friends and family to donate money to be used toward the establishment of a pediatric unit at Jobat Christian Hospital. To our eternal gratitude, tens of thousands of dollars have been donated—by friends and strangers. After my first visit to India in January 2008, we decided



to establish an ongoing fund to support the medical and educational needs of the children of Jobat. The WMS graciously took on the administration of the Sam Travis-Miller Fund. The fund is to support children, but beyond that broad stipulation, the members of the leadership team in Jobat (consisting of the medical superintendent, the principal of the school, and the minister of the church) have total control over the disbursement of the funds.

Our friendship with the people of Jobat and the surrounding region has been a source of joy and healing. The words, God is great, are never far from the lips of those Christians, who show tremendous faith and love in circumstances that, by our Western standards, seem impoverished and unstable. Our Indian friends have taught us gratitude and hope, reminding us that God does indeed work all things together for good.

I wish to thank Sarah for sharing her journey with us.

The Sam Travis-Miller Memorial Fund is one of several funds to which you can donate if you are interested in supporting a particular project.

Janet Brewer

Remembering Pakistan

Months have passed since devastating monsoon floods hit Pakistan, and millions are still struggling to rebuild their lives. PWS&D continues to help more than 500,000 people grow food, restore their livelihoods and access healthcare.

Please help continue this important work by remembering victims of the Pakistan floods in your prayers and with your financial support today.



Presbyterian World Service & Development

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Glad Tidings Reader Survey

Please take a moment to tell us how we are doing. Your answers will help us to better serve you. Thank You!

Answers can be mailed to:

Glad Tidings Magazine
Attn: Colleen Wood, Editor
50 Wynford Drive
Toronto ON M3C 1J7

Or emailed to:

gladtidings@presbyterian.ca

1. When you receive your copy of the *Glad Tidings*, what do you read first?
2. What is your favourite part of *Glad Tidings*?
3. What would you change about *Glad Tidings*?
4. What theme would you like addressed in *Glad Tidings*?
5. Are you a member of a WMS group?
6. Does your local group use *Glad Tidings* in their meetings?

Remembering

Ora Bruce
Belgrave WMS, Blyth ON

Mary Huether
Brussels (Melville) WMS,
Brussels ON

Bessie Brown
Sarah-Dunning Auxiliary,
Knox, Dundas ON

Het Smith
St. Andrew's, Kars, Ontario

Dorothy Bailey
St. Andrew's WMS,
Kitchener ON

Marjorie Gilbert
Grace Quinn
New St. James,
London ON

Marguerite Challice
Centreville, South
Monaghan ON

Marion Hislop
Daisy Macintosh.
St. Andrew's WMS,
Saskatoon SK

Florence Walker
Edna Smith Auxiliary,
Cheyne Presbyterian WMS,
Stoney Creek ON

Mrs. Catherine (Kay)
Grainger
Armour Heights,
Toronto ON

Susie Adamson
Glebe Presbyterian Church,
Toronto ON

Lucille Gorham
St. Andrew's, Welland ON

Aleta Conn
St. Andrew's, Wingham ON

Mrs. Evelyn Snider
St. Andrew's, Maple ON

Anne Nisbet
St. Andrew's WMS,
Mooretown ON

Alice Carson
Knox Presbyterian Church,
Port Alberni BC

Jeanette McLaren
St. George's, London ON

Mrs. Jean Hall
Annie Purves Group, St.
Paul's WMS,
Port Hope ON

Eunice Ruppel
Friendship Auxiliary,
St. Mary's ON

Marion Lumsden
Mary and Martha Group,
St. Andrew's, Strathroy ON

Names for Remembering can be sent by post or email. Please ensure names are typed or clearly written, and include your WMS group name (or congregation) and location.

Pass Me Along

Please help to promote *Glad Tidings* and the work of the WMS.
When you have finished reading your copy, encourage:

A young person to read, *To Triumph is to Overcome Your Fears* (p. 8)

A runner or young mother to read, *Miles and Miles of Small Steps*
(p. 18)

An advocate to read, *Victories* (p. 4)



Planting Seeds of Hope for Generations to Come

How Planned Gifts Are Growing the Church and Its Mission



provisionaries
Planting seeds of hope. The generosity of others.

We all need to know that our loving Creator knows us by name. This is especially true of First Nations people, who are striving to restore their sense of identity and purpose in Canadian culture. The Presbyterian Church in Canada is working with Aboriginal people to build strong, healthy relationships through ministries such as the Mistawasis Memorial Presbyterian Church on the Mistawasis Reserve in Saskatchewan and our Healing and Reconciliation initiative. Planned gifts helped build Winnipeg Inner City Mission's new "Place of Hope," and donors are contributing to Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry's feeding program for homeless and marginalized people through the newly established "Feed My Sheep" Trust Fund.

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Glad Tidings

A young man with light brown hair, wearing a red beanie and blue denim shorts, is sitting on a wooden deck. He is leaning back and playing an acoustic guitar. The deck is made of weathered wooden planks. In the background, there are lush green trees and a wooden building with shingles. The overall scene is peaceful and summery.

July/August 2011

Feature Story:
Presbyterian
Women's
Gathering



4 Presbyterian Women's Gathering by Colleen Wood

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Glad Tidings

July/August 2011

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We came together and formed a community. We laughed. We struggled. We danced. We sang. We worshipped. We prayed. And after four short days, we departed. The National Presbyterian Women's Gathering was held on May 20–23 and over 550 women (and a few men) came together for an exciting time of faith and learning. Now, I ask ... what comes next?

Most of us have had an experience that left us invigorated and ready for action. It might have been a mission trip, camp, musical concert, Synodical meeting, or the National Presbyterian Women's Gathering. The challenge is that the energy from these events is sometimes fleeting. We come home and quickly get back into our habits and routines. We fondly remember the experience, but it doesn't make much of a difference in our life, and certainly not in our world.

But it can! It can make a difference. You can make a difference. Here are a few ideas for how you can take the experience of the National Women's Gathering, or just how you can make some positive changes, this Summer or Fall:

- Read a challenging book. So often we choose a light read for the summer, but this summer I challenge you to read something that will make you think. Consider *The Ethical Imagination* or *The Ethical Canary* by Margaret Somerville; *On the Farm: Robert William Pickton and the Tragic Story Of Vancouver's Missing Women* by Stevie Cameron; *Emerging from the Dark Age Ahead: The Future of the North American Church* by Charles Fensham; or *Their Jihad ... Not My Jihad* by Raheel Raza. All of these individuals were presenters at the Women's Gathering.
- Write a letter this summer—not to an old friend, but to a local politician. Think about a topic you are passionate (and hopefully knowledgeable) about and let your politicians know your view. You can mail your letter free of charge to Members of the House of Commons as long as the letters MP appear on the mailing.

continued on page 28

PRESBYTERIAN

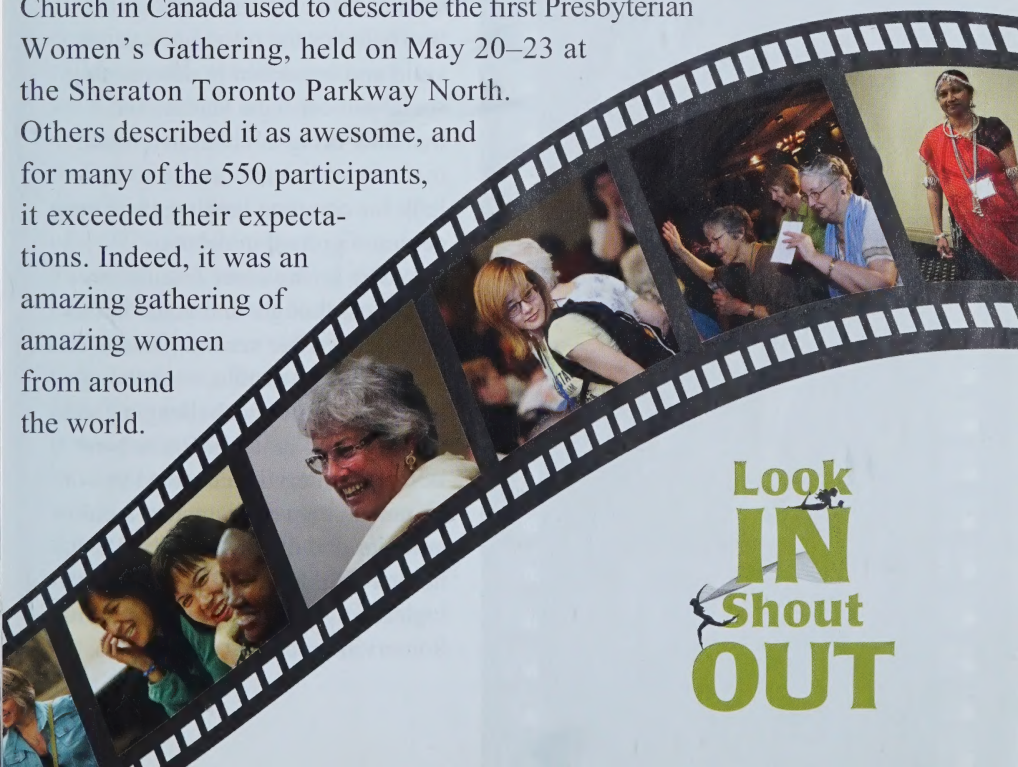


WOMEN'S GATHERING

Richmond Hill, Ontario
May 20-23, 2011

by Colleen Wood

"Bold and courageous," were the words that the Rev. Herb Gale, Moderator of the 136th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada used to describe the first Presbyterian Women's Gathering, held on May 20-23 at the Sheraton Toronto Parkway North. Others described it as awesome, and for many of the 550 participants, it exceeded their expectations. Indeed, it was an amazing gathering of amazing women from around the world.



Look
IN
Shout
OUT

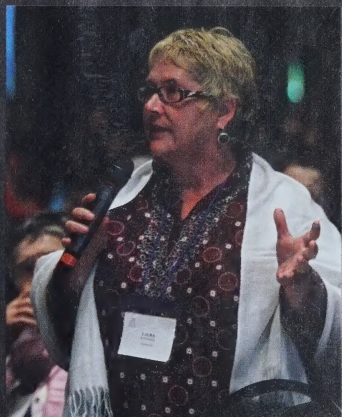
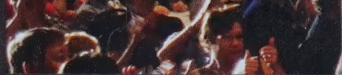


The highlights are many, but certainly the speakers had many of us talking over meals and late into the night. Dr. Margaret Somerville, Samuel Gale Professor of Law, Professor in the Faculty of Medicine, and Founding Director of the Centre for Medicine, Ethics, and Law at McGill University, Montreal, gave two lectures, the first on Friday afternoon. In this first address, *Should Religion have a Voice in Public Square*, Somerville states that a religious voice is often silenced in contemporary debate. She challenged us to *Look In and Shout Out* and ensure that there is a religious voice in the public square, and that to remove the religious (or the secular voice) is anti-democratic. She believes the religious voice is valid and important in determining social-ethical-legal values, and that they bring a 'collective moral memory'. She encouraged us to look for common language and even common ground in debate.

After laying some foundation on ethical thought and voice in this first plenary, her second plenary was even more accessible, even though it addressed a very challenging and controversial issue. In *Brave New Babies*, Somerville educated us on new human reproductive technologies and discussed a child's human right to their natural biological origins and family structure. Somerville proposes that the most

fundamental human right is a child's right to be born of natural human origins; that a child knows who their biological parents and family are; and that they are raised within their biological families, except in the rare cases where that is not in the best interest of a particular child. Many of the new reproductive technologies unlink the child-parent biological bonds. Most of the laws governing these technologies have focused on the adult's rights, not those of the child.

Although we have recently felt it necessary to provide the information for adoptive children on their biological parents, we have not done the same for children born using reproductive technologies, such as gamete donation and donor conception. Many children conceived from donors are now reaching adulthood and they are asking difficult questions! Many feel that they experience a loss of identity by not knowing one or both of their biological parents. They feel a sense of loss, and wonder if they have siblings or other biological relatives. They have a challenging time developing their own sense of self. They pass others and wonder if that person might be their father, mother, brother, or sister. Somerville would argue that at the very least, if donor conception continues, information regarding the biological parents must be provided for the health and well-being of these children.



Somerville was so well received that her two books that deal with these issues, *The Ethical Canary* and *The Ethical Imagination*, sold out from our Marketplace by the second day of the event. We wanted to know more about these issues and learn how to make our voices heard!

On Saturday night we welcomed Stevie Cameron as our banquet speaker. Stevie Cameron is a journalist and a Presbyterian. She recently released the book, *On The Farm, Robert William Pickton and the Tragic Story of Vancouver's Missing Women*. Cameron felt equipped to write this book because 20 years ago, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, King Street, Toronto, let her start Out of the Cold. She ran this ministry for 17 years and worked with the homeless, the addicted, the dependant, and the mentally ill.



We were privileged to have over 30 visitors from many of our partner churches join us. Before the Gathering started, PCC staff, some early participants, and many of those who helped organized the Gathering, welcomed our guests with a reception, tour of the National Office, and a dinner (hosted by International Ministries).

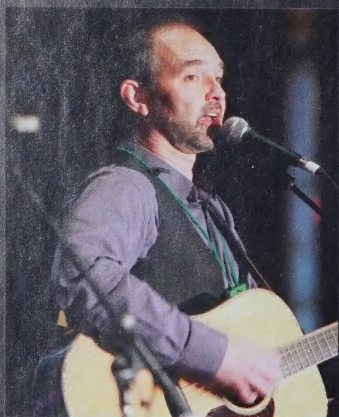
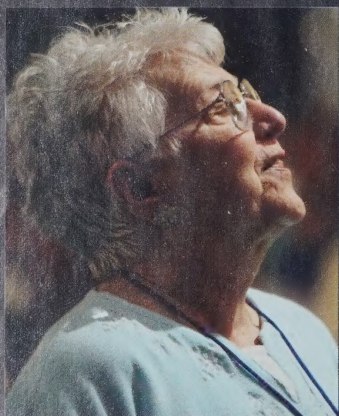
At the Gathering, participants were given the chance to learn more about our visitors and their mission in their own churches during a Cultural Caravan. Time was spent chatting with these exciting women, learning more about their work and their lives through pictures and displays.

While researching this book, she often heard that the women that Robert Picton murdered made their own choice which is not true—no girl chooses to be a prostitute and a drug addict. Cameron believes that saying this just removes our responsibility. What happened to these girls can happen to anyone's daughter.

What most impacted me, was hearing Cameron say, "These girls were loved and missed and these girls loved." The girls that Cameron met while researching the story loved and missed their kids. They would never miss phoning or sending a card on a birthday. They loved their moms and/or dads, and always phoned on Mother's day or made and sent a dream catcher. They loved their street nurses, their doctors, their siblings, their social workers. These women were reported missing—their doctor would call to say they missed an appointment; their friend



The group by country: Naa Angerley Pepra-Ameyaw, Cecilia Owusu-Ansah (Ghana); Elena Catarina Morales de Leon, Carmelina Sam Sop (Guatemala); Hajnalka Domokos, Eszter Karsay (Hungary); Karuna Roy, Flora Kalib (India); Pil-Soon Kim, Soo-Hae Oh, Jungja Kim, Haeok Kim, Keun Kim (Japan); Veronicah Njoki Muchiri, Kellen Gatakaa Mbaabu (Kenya); Bok Ju Kwon, Ji Seong Ahn (Korea); Mercy Chilapula, Mercy Chilapula, Lovely Alice Kamanga, Jessie Mkandawire (Malawi); Mercy Akpama, Eunice Kalu, Elizabeth Etteh (Nigeria); Alison Angus (Scotland); Hsing-Ling Lee, Ibu Kandudao (Taiwan); Joan Berglund, Jenny Lee, Chris Wolf, Alice F. Wyatt (United States).



reported them missing; their social workers reported them missing. Plenty of people didn't care that prostitutes were going missing, but these women were (and are) missed. Cameron received a standing ovation and many purchased her book to learn more about these women. Later, I heard that some were apprehensive of what the evening's presentation would encompass, but once Cameron began speaking they were relieved and engaged because her focus was on the women—not on Picton and his horrific acts.

Our final speaker was the Rev. Margaret Mullin, Executive Director of Winnipeg Inner City Mission of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Margaret is who she believes, "my creator intended me to be." Her Anishinabe name is Thundering Eagle Woman. Her Christian name is Margaret Ivane Mullin. She has both a Presbyterian understanding of Christian spirituality and an Ojibway understanding of Indigenous spirituality. She considers herself a strong-willed Canadian woman (eh?). She celebrates who she is, but she also says the journey has not been easy. Both the Church and the traditional Indigenous Elders thought she needed to choose between her Christian faith or the Indigenous spirituality. Yet, Margaret could not leave half of herself behind. Margaret calls herself a strong Obi-Celtic woman and a passionate follower of Jesus Christ.

Mullin introduced us to the amazing ministry that Winnipeg Inner City Mission is involved in and with indigenous people. She spoke of their learn-and-play program for children ages one to five that teaches the adult caregiver how to interact and play with their child, and prepare that child for school. She spoke of children and youth programs at Flora House, where children come in at one to two years below the grade level and within two years are at par or above their grade level. She spoke of an employment program, where men and women are given clean affordable housing for three years and support (Parish Social Worker, Aboriginal Elder, Outreach Nurse) to move forward in their life. She even ministers to a growing (how many of our congregations can say that!) worship community—39 adults and 37 children in worship last week. They worship in Cree, Ojibway, and English.

Mullin also talked about the great need of the mission—Flora House needs a new dishwasher and a roof on their garage; their van is dying, and a lack of funding means a staff member may need to be laid off. She also needs food, good used clothing, household items, and basic supplies for children's programs. She also needs prayers, encouragement, and letters of support. Finally, she encouraged us all to make a friend with an indigenous person—we need to know someone to whom



injustice has been done to understand it. Some were so moved by Mullin's address that they sent her home with financial donations to the mission.

In addition to the wonderful knowledge gained from our speakers, we also had many workshops to feed our body, mind, and soul. Women chose to attend workshops such as Sun, Sand, and Muslim Women; Reading the Scripture as Women; Women and Grief; Yoga as Christian Practice; Personal Financial Management; Finding God in Frantic Moments; and Experience a Traditional Aboriginal Talking Circle.

Here, Elizabeth Brewer, a participant at the event, writes about her workshops:

I was privileged to participate in the workshop, Prayer of the Heart and Body—Yoga as Christian Practice, led by Lucinda Lyman. It was a wonderful workshop that allowed everyone to learn and experience some basic yoga practices that we will be able to do at home. The combination of Yoga and Christian Spirituality is a very natural combination and can help to focus prayers and meditations while renewing our bodies and minds. I found this workshop to be exactly what I needed! At the end of a day filled with “head” exercises, it was great to be able to focus on my body, letting go of stress and learning to breathe again.

I also participated in the workshop, Women and Grief, led by Shuling Chen. In this workshop, we discussed the different ways we grieve and shared parts of our “Grief Journey” (all of the experiences of grief we have had in our lives). One of my most important take-aways from

A few other workshops highlighted below were Mission Today; Beauty from Brokenness

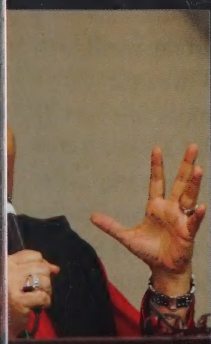


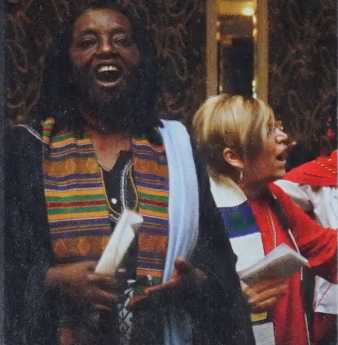
this workshop, was that we do not only grieve the loss of a life in our lives. We grieve for all kinds of different things including relationships, material possessions, our health, and life transitions. This helped me to reflect on the ways we offer pastoral care to each other and how important it is to share our grief stories. The wonderful thing about sharing our stories is that as wounded story tellers we become wounded healers.

Another highlight from the event was our worship times. On Sunday morning, our international partners provided much of the leadership in worship. What an amazing time as we were led in prayer by our Korean, Hungarian, Nigerian, and Japanese partners (leading their prayers in their own language, while we could read the English interpretation on the screens). Our scripture passages came to us in Spanish, Taiwanese, and through a dramatic reading by the Rev. Olwyn Coughlin. And the offering was incredible. Our partners from Ghana, Nigeria, Malawi, and Kenya had us singing and dancing up to the front to joyfully give our financial support to the PWS&D project that provides education for girls in Afghanistan. Almost \$15,000 was collected for this worthwhile project. The Rev. Paulette Brown, Director of the Flemingdon Gateway Mission After School Program, preached a moving sermon, entitled *Some Women*.

Our Monday morning worship included the celebration of Holy Communion. Margaret Mullin began this worship with a moving liturgy, including drumming, and the Rev. Herb Gale preached, and led communion with his wife, the Rev. Shirley Gale. Herb Gale's sermon, *Antiquity or Ubiquity*, focused on the

Sand, and Muslim Women; and Experience a Traditional Talking Circle.





scripture passage, The Road To Emmaus, and he reminded us that Christ is with us at the gathering, but that Christ also goes with each of us when we leave the gathering. Communion was especially meaningful, as table groups broke the bread and received communion together. The Rev. Glen Soderholm provided the music leadership for both services, and also for morning Praise Times. The music was a great combination of traditional favourites and contemporary praise songs.

Finally, we had an evening of entertainment. Saturday evening participants had a choice of an evening on their own, or an event planned by The Women's Gathering. Some attended a dinner at Vaughan Community Church, and Katherine Allen provided the following review of the evening:

Approximately 110 people from across Canada were warmly welcomed by members of the Vaughan Community Church. We appreciated sharing a traditional Korean meal, which was the first time for some people to sample this delicious food. After a busy day of workshops, everyone enjoyed a relaxing evening of music provided by very gifted and talented members of the congregation. We listened to Won Pyo Hong play the

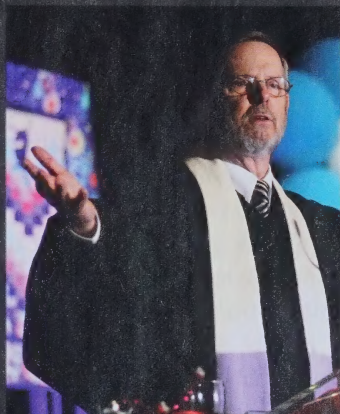
saxophone and Young Mi Cho, a soprano soloist. So Sun Suh played a traditional Korean musical instrument; and the Men's Choir sang a variety of songs. Thank you to Vaughan Church for their kind hospitality.

Another option was a concert at the hotel, here reviewed by participant, Deb Wood:

The Rev. Jim Czegledi began the evening with stories and jokes and then the entertainment continued with Celtic music from Clan Hannigan. The evening wrapped up with music provided by the Lost Pilgrims. Their music included rock-and-roll, folk, bluegrass, and gospel. It was a fun evening and that had the audience toe tapping, clapping, and dancing.

The final option was a lovely dinner and evening at St. James Presbyterian Church in Stouffville.

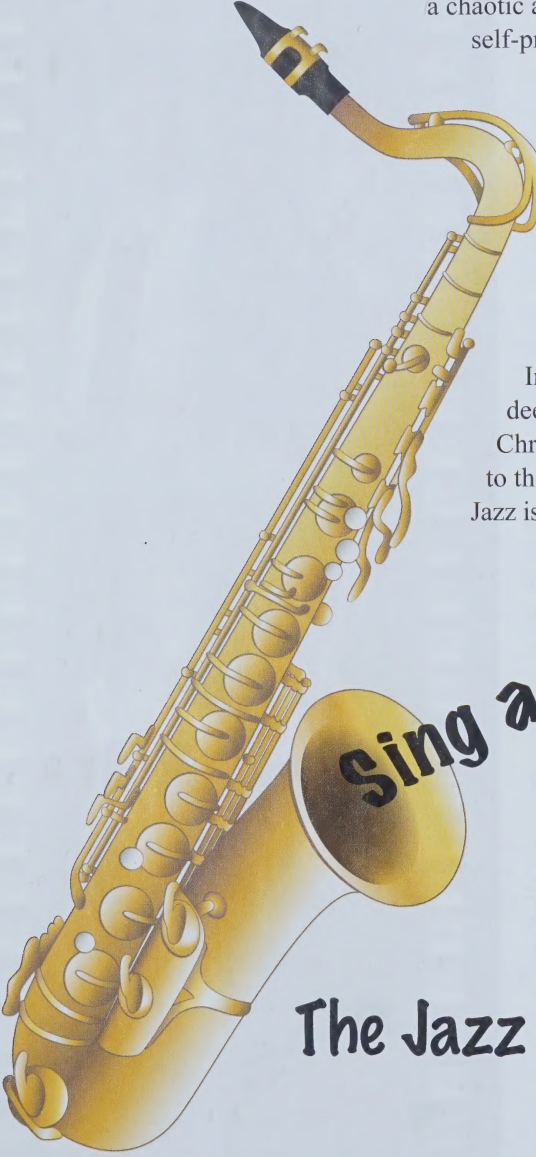
Joan Smith, WMS President, and Jennifer Whitfield, AMS President, said that The National Women's Gathering was a labour of love for those who planned the event. As the event unfolded, that love was shared with others, who embraced the experience. It was amazing to have Presbyterian women from across Canada, and around the world, share, rejoice, pray, give, challenge, and be challenged. Thanks be to God!



Linking “jazz” and “religion” may cause some raised eyebrows. After all, earlier in the 20th century, many Christians regarded jazz as “devil’s music” associated with the loose, hedonistic life of the city—smoky bars, alcohol, drugs, and all.

More pointedly, jazz is often viewed negatively as a chaotic and undisciplined form of musical self-preoccupation, where musicians just express themselves with no regard for the audience or for musical taste. As one author puts it, jazz is a symbol of the worst in our individualistic pop culture, where “doing your thing” and “feeling good” become the norm.

Now, as a jazz musician, I believe there is more to jazz than this. In fact, I think there is something deeply spiritual about it. Living the Christian life has remarkable affinities to the character of jazz performance. Jazz is a wonderful metaphor for walking



Sing a New Song

The Jazz of Christian Life

by Tom Reynolds

Jazz embodies through sound and musical interaction the kind of faithful hope in the future that the resurrection embodies.

the road of faith, even meeting the risen Christ.

Jazz sings a new song, celebrating in the present as if the future is full of promise. It embodies the longing in our heart for something more, that passionate search for an entryway into a deeper sense of being alive. And this reflects a tenacious hope in the possibility of beginning anew, a hope that refuses to be held captive by the past, by disappointments and defeats. Jazz stretches out into the future by exploring possibilities beyond mere (musical) repetition, deliberately seeking to break free from constrictive powers and principalities in order to pry open a passageway to new and vitalizing forms of variation and novelty. Jazz expects surprises. Jazz sings a new song.

But this is not easy. We face hardship, frustration, mistakes, and real setbacks that mitigate and diminish hope. And I think something like this is what the followers of Jesus were struggling with in the days subsequent to his death.

However, the experience of the resurrection brought about something new. Jesus' message of hope and redemption was not trumped by tragedy. The "final say" of death was

not the ultimate word after all. God had overcome the tragedy of the cross and made all things new, affirming the person and work of Jesus as revelatory. The world was now seen differently; everything had changed. A new song could be sung, a song that signals becoming opened to the world again, moving forward despite disaster into a space of life, vitality, and insight. Hope washes over despair. Love is stronger than death.

Resurrection, however, does not solve all our problems with disappointments and tragedy, suffering and death. Instead, it frames them all within the context of God's love, a love that accompanies us along the way, even when we don't recognize it, and opens up the future, freeing us from a broken past. It gives us the incentive to carry on into a future of promise. With this, we come to jazz.

Jazz embodies through sound and musical interaction the kind of faithful hope in the future that the resurrection embodies. Out of the stuff of old music, a new song emerges, a song of redemption that carries us forward, promising a flourishing beyond the apparent finality of defeat and tragedy.

It is no accident that jazz stems from the heritage of African-American

Let's play jazz, and thus, remake the world in the image of God's love.

spirituals, songs of hope that were sung amidst the deplorable conditions of slavery. As theologian James Cone notes, the spirituals allowed the slaves to transcend their plight and envision new possibilities of life. This music is imbued with resurrection faith, affirming human dignity, and freedom before God.

As jazz began to take shape in urban centres across America during the first half of the 20th century, it continued to trade on the impulse of the spirituals, on a creative pulse that symbolically reconstructed and subverted the world as white society made it. And this new world, this new song, resonated with “life”—with the power of improvisational vitality.

While jazz can be defined in many ways, almost everyone agrees that improvisation is a central ingredient. Improvisation blurs the line between composition and performance. For, to a real degree, the musician composes as he or she goes along. This fact makes jazz almost a paradigm case of musical spontaneity, innovation, and novelty, representing creative freedom and flexibility.

Jazz risks new ways of looking at a subject matter—in this case, a particular song—in order to bring it alive in the moment, making it real for

a new day. It explores different possibilities, different routes of entering into the material. The jazz musician does not consider himself or herself to be bound by imitation, merely looking to the past in order to repeat it. A new song is sung. Even mistakes are transformed into new beginnings. The old music is not forgotten; it is just renewed, reinterpreted, and reinvigorated. Musicians often refer to this process as “riffing.” In riffing, a familiar melody becomes imaginatively transformed, played anew in the performance itself.

Is this not the stuff of our daily lives? We rise in the morning not knowing what will meet us, but we venture forth anyway, travelling down familiar roads, but improvising and adapting to new experiences along the way, “riffing” in conversation with others.

I believe that built into our lives is a longing to become open to the world anew, to something more than where we are, something richer and more complete. We are unfinished beings. And amidst mistakes, disappointments, and defeats, we yearn to be fulfilled. We begin again and again. We hunger for resurrection. As long as we live, there is always the possibility of connecting to something

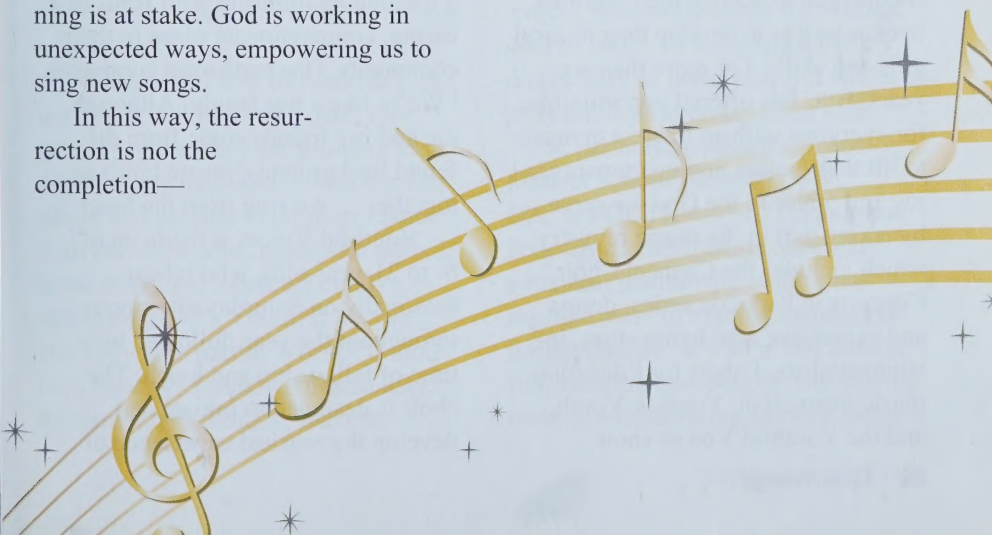
more, a possibility that inspires hope and frees us from being held captive by the past or trapped in a routine, predictable, perhaps safe and secure, but sterile existence. There may indeed be horrible things in our past. We may have made mistakes and done wrong, and we may ourselves have been wronged. But an obstinate desire to move forward prevents most of us from falling into despair and indifference. We try to move on, despite peril and tragedy.

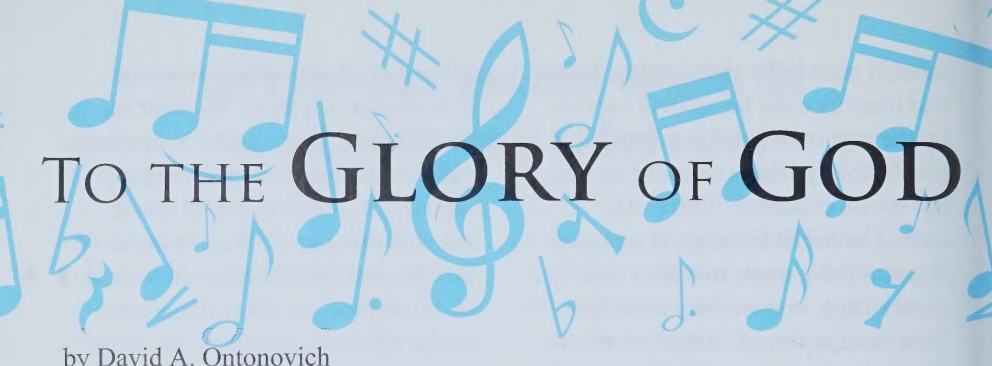
In conversation with the music of our lives, we build upon old songs and are accompanied by the risen Christ in the process. At any moment, Christ may become recognizable—surprising us unexpectedly in the tender touch of a loved one, an act of hospitality, the smile of a child, the comforting words of a friend, the beauty of a sunset, the caring for those in need, or even perhaps in the creative energy of jazz. Learning to expect surprises is part of the Christian life. For a new beginning is at stake. God is working in unexpected ways, empowering us to sing new songs.

In this way, the resurrection is not the completion—

rather it is a beginning, a resource of further anticipation. We wait for God's arrival in our midst in openness and anticipation. But this waiting is not passive. It makes joyful music that stretches out ... We can move past the past, and be released toward the future in hope. So perhaps jazz can be a metaphor for how we might live in openness with God, singing a new song. Let's play jazz, and thus, remake the world in the image of God's love.

Tom Reynolds is Associate Professor of Theology at Emmanuel College, Victoria University of the University of Toronto. Tom enjoys spending time with his family, playing jazz piano, listening to music of all kinds, biking, exercising, and exploring nature in whatever way possible. Music runs deep in his life—while finishing his graduate degree, he played music professionally in Nashville, TN.





TO THE GLORY OF GOD

by David A. Ontonovich

Music is an important part of the life, work, and worship of Bonar-Parkdale Presbyterian Church (BPC). We constantly strive to love God, to love our neighbours better, and to demonstrate our love in many ways. Through our study of the scriptures, through acts of service, through seeking justice, through prayer, and by coming together as a community, music enables us to approach God using our senses and intellects, allowing us to worship with our whole beings.

BPC's music ministry is designed so that those "called to serve" are encouraged to deepen their spiritual lives as well as to develop their musical gifts and skills. For more than six years, BPC has offered opportunities for everyone with an interest in music to lift their voices and instruments in joy and praise to the God we serve by taking part in the music ministry, which includes the Chancel Choir, Concerts in Parkdale series, drama and expressive arts, hymn sings, instrumentalists, Labels for Education, music instruction, Youth-4-Youth, and the Youthful Voices choir.

Youthful Voices is one of BPC's evolving and growing music ministry outreach programs. With a handful of children and youth in 2008, Youthful Voices would sing periodically throughout the year as part of the children's story giving during worship. Today, Youthful Voices is comprised of more than 25 gifted and talented inner-city youth, who love music and have experienced barriers to access. Through music, whether a vocal, instrumental, or expressive art, BPC's music ministry welcomes and nurtures participants, who desire a lifelong relationship with Jesus in a caring, compassionate place in their community. One participant comments, "We're like a big family. Although me and my friends come from different backgrounds, music binds us together ... we sing from the heart."

Youthful Voices is made up of 6- to 21-year-olds, who rehearse seasonally on Saturday afternoons throughout the year, followed by a time of fellowship and lunch. The choir is designed to initiate and develop the musical experience of

children and youth, who have little or no musical training. As a result, participants have the opportunity to experience their own progress as they master music with greater vocal ability and musical understanding. BPC's music ministry's goals include music literacy (beginning with score study—rhythm, melodic contour, dynamics, finding parts, reading text in English or perhaps another language; choral technique (listening, following the conductor, routines, awareness of other parts, for example, accompaniment and harmony, unison singing, rounds, partner songs); and vocal technique (healthy vocal production, basic physiology of singing, alignment

Christmas Eve, Church Anniversary, Lent, Palm Sunday, Easter, Mother's Day, Pentecost, and Trinity Sunday. Additionally, Youthful Voices has led special worship services and shared their gifts of music and expressive art through the presentation of the following pageants: The Word Became Flesh by the Rev. Dr. Lonnie S. Atkinson, Infant King by Ken Bible—a celebration of the Christ child in scripture, story, dramatization, and song; and Discover Jesus Christ by Ken Bible—a celebration of the risen Christ in scripture and song. There is also a desire, whether as a group or as individuals, to take part in future Mission Awareness and Presbyterians

"THE AIM AND FINAL END OF ALL MUSIC SHOULD
BE NONE OTHER THAN THE GLORY OF GOD AND
THE REFRESHMENT OF THE SOUL." J.S. BACH

of the body, breathing, mouth shape, resonance awareness—which is always a favourite!)

When asked how to describe these inner-city children and youth, one would say that they are growing in numbers and motivated with a burning desire and passion to do more! Some with part-time jobs, most with school, homework, and extracurricular activities, BPC's Youthful Voices currently take part in World Communion Sunday, Thanksgiving Sunday, Remembrance Sunday, Advent,

Sharing worship services. Youthful Voices breathes life into the musical soul of BPC! To experience the joy and artistry of these youthful voices is truly an inspiration for all to hear.

In partnership with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), BPC's YOUTH-4-YOUTH program is designed for students, who play a musical instrument, enjoy singing, and want to express themselves through music. It's all about having fun, meeting new people, and sharing musical talents during worship services

and at special events. YOUTH-4-YOUTH provides an opportunity for inner-city youth to earn credits towards their diploma requirements while enjoying a flexible schedule, and is also a great way to get involved close to home (or not so close for some). Non-musical applicants can also be accommodated. Since 2004, more than 35 youth have made the grade with us! This innovative pro-

who reside locally and throughout the GTA.

BPC is a very musical place. In addition to the above ministries, instrumentalists—whether called to serve or those who just love music—enhance BPC's worship experience throughout the year by sharing their musical gifts at worship services and special Church celebrations. Instrumentation is varied and may include

“ONE OF THE INCREDIBLE VALUES OF MUSIC
IS THAT IT CAN TRANSPORT US TO THE
EXPERIENCES OF OTHER PEOPLE.”

gram is fully compliant with both the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement and The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Leading With Care Policy. As an accredited volunteer resource management consultant, BPC's Director of Music manages these placements and has enjoyed a collaborative relationship with the Toronto District School Board for more than 25 years.

As an outreach project, BPC's Director of Music and Organist also provides pro-bono piano and voice instruction for inner-city youth, who exemplify a love and desire to learn and experience barriers to access. This program, fully aligned with the Royal Conservatory of Music, prepares inner-city students for the accredited examination curriculum. Also, BPC's music ministry can also recommend a variety of instructors and teachers,

a combination of acoustic and electric guitar, piano, percussion, saxophone, string and woodwind, steel drums and djembe—to mention a few. One instrumentalist says, “Music is sort of soft eyes for everyone ... it sort of ties everyone together and becomes a universal language ... and we are one in Christ.”

David A. Ontonovich, Director of Music and Organist, oversees all aspects of BPC's music ministry including vocal, instrumental, and expressive arts for adult, youth, and children. David brings a diverse musical background and extensive knowledge of choral repertory suited to traditional anthem, hymns, and contemporary styles of liturgical music and worship. To learn more about BPC and its music ministry, visit us at www.bonarparkdale.wordpress.com.

Story Update



I asked Vivian Bertrand for an update to her article, *Miles and Miles of Small Steps*, in the May/June *Glad Tidings* and here it is!

The night before I ran my half marathon, I went to sleep early. We were sleeping at a beach house near the race start, and at 1:00 a.m. my son walked into our bedroom and woke me up. Then my daughter kept coughing and coughing. I was up, on and off, from 1:00 a.m. until 2:30 a.m., and we had to get up at 5:30 a.m. to get a parking spot near the start of the race!



Despite the rough night, I woke up excited and positive. I felt an overwhelming sense of thanksgiving. The weather was perfect, my husband was wonderfully supportive, and the kids were great. I prayed during the race. I talked to other runners. I even enjoyed it the whole way. I stuck with the 8-min/mile pace leader (a 61-year-old marathoner) until the very end when I sped up. He coached me throughout the race.

The final two kilometres were all along the ocean with spectators on one side and the beach on the other. I finished in 1:44:11, which put me in the top 3% of women. I was overwhelmed with thanksgiving and praise. It was an amazing experience.

Presbyterian Music Camp:

Living and Rejoicing

In Christian Community

by Marilyn Broadhead

At Presbyterian Music Camp, our focus is Christ and music is the principal means by which we celebrate Him. Ours is a camp for families and individuals, who come together to experience Christian community.

First Impressions

The first time that I attended Presbyterian Music Camp, I was ten years old. It was in 1976 and the camp was still located at the United Church's Golden Lake Camp. Music Camp had taken to using this camp during the last full week of August, after the young summer campers and their counsellors had returned home to get ready for school. Our camp was different. Our camp included babies, young families, lots of teenagers, couples whose children had grown up and left home, single women in their sixties and seventies—everyone you might meet at your home church!

I don't remember what the weather was like that year, but I do remember the music and the people. The whole camp worked together all week to present, "Jonah-Man Jazz." Alison Stewart-Patterson, one of the Camp's founders, conducted. I say conducted, but her conducting was more like a larger-than-life dance of joy! (She paid dearly for her extravagance later on at our Kangaroo Court, when she had to sit perfectly still in a chair and conduct the Camp choir with her pinky fingers. Ouch!) Costumes were created, backdrops were painted, music was practised, and everyone participated in some way. I was a "wave," along with a bunch of the other children, and I think I can still sing all of the songs. And while

my mind was learning the music, my heart was beginning to learn about Christian community.

My Teen Years

After what felt like forever, finally, I was in the teen cabin—the land of independence! Funny thing though—we teens were still very much a part of the camp community. Our families were with us, we sang in the Camp choir as well as the teen choir, we participated in and even helped lead workshops, we did dishes (singing the whole time!), and we participated in the leadership of morning and evening devotions. We had our own space, but we really belonged in the larger group as well. Our musical role-models were amazing—gifted choral conductors, inspiring songwriters, talented vocalists and instrumentalists—but, more than their talent, these adults were people we respected for their kindness, patience, and their willingness to engage with us. What we learned along the way was that they were inspired by us as well—our energy, our raw talent, our eagerness to learn, our willingness to take risks, and the way we looked after each other and the younger children.

During my teens, Presbyterian Music Camp was the beginning of my year. I arrived excited to see my friends again and went home emotionally and spiritually renewed for another year at school and church.



“The Adults Are Here”

You know you’re not one of the teens anymore when you go down to the campfire at night and someone says, “The adults are here.” Believe me, it comes as a surprise. I’m a little older now, but the same God-filled moments that awed me at camp when I was a teen still give a chill—singing pieces in the Camp choir that you can only sing because you have strength in numbers that most church choirs can only dream of; watching little ones fall asleep cuddled happily in the laps of teenagers they didn’t even know a week ago; walking back to the cabin at night by the light of the Milky Way or even the magical

dancing of the *Aurora Borealis*; myriad impromptu concerts and, yes, singing by the campfire and laughing with friends well into the night. There are new God-filled moments as well: playing in the concert band with my teen-aged son,

the odd calm moment sitting reading or watching the water while the kids are busy with their friends, meeting the children of the kids I used to teach in Children’s Choir, or chatting with old friends who still see the teenager inside me.

Getting older isn’t all bad. Parents have the special gift of experiencing again some of the things they did when they were young through the eyes of their children. Now I get to watch my son play his beloved bass in the Garage Band, and my older daughter experience the crystalline beauty—and teamwork—of handbell playing. My younger daughter’s smile

“The common threads that still bring us together at Music Camp each summer are a love of music and a desire to experience Christian community.”

beams in the Children's Choir and she's still thrilled by the idea that she gets to buy candy every day at the tuck shop. But my husband and I are still campers too. He's bought himself a lovely ukulele and knows enough chords to teach the beginner class. I sing and play my French horn, and have a (very secret) desire to sing with the Garage Band one day.

Some say they feel camp has started when they experience 'the Circle' and 'the Flame' on Sunday evening, with the repeated, "Ubi Caritas et Amor, Deus Ibi Est," (Where there is charity and love, there is God) and the lighting of the candles brought by each family to camp. It's a "coming home" feeling. For me, it comes even earlier—with the grace at dinner. All of the chaos associated with getting three kids and assorted instruments packed, dropping the dog off at the kennel, arranging for house-sitting, and planning workshops, is forgotten when we start to sing grace. I think it's the first moment new campers start to suspect that this might be something different. Everyone is singing—really singing! Not quietly, but strongly—

in many-part harmony. The music is beautiful and this is the first sign of the coming together of this community in Christ.

The common threads that still bring us together at Music Camp each summer are a love of music and a desire to experience Christian community. There's something about being in a loving community that opens your heart and changes your perspective. Seeing the wonderful musicians at camp could make me feel inadequate, but instead it inspires me to practise just a little harder. Seeing someone spend an afternoon teaching little kids how to use a fishing rod motivates me to be a little more patient. Seeing the perseverance of campers with health or mobility challenges encourages me to never give up. Hearing someone play a banjo in the concert after learning for only a week energizes me to be more courageous. Experiencing the uniqueness that each new camper



“May you see the face of Christ in everyone you meet, and may everyone you meet see the face of Christ in you.” (Celtic Prayer)

brings to camp reminds me that we all have sacred gifts and that Christ’s community is for everyone.

A Little History

Music Camp was organized as a one-time event in 1972 to introduce the new Presbyterian Book of Praise. The hope was that church organists would attend to learn some of the new music, and it seemed reasonable to have it in the summer since their availability was better then. And, if it was going to be in the summer, why not invite their families as well? The families who attended that year (many of whom are still represented at camp) had a wonderful time and the organizing committee was encouraged to do it again the next year. Brought together

by the music, they had found a new Christian community. The Camp grew, and by 1990 it had outgrown the Golden Lake site. Presbyterian Music Camp now takes place at Camp Tamarack, near Bracebridge, in the last full week of August each year. The camp committee and staff are all dedicated volunteers.

Marilyn Broadhead lives in Kingston with her music-loving husband and three children. You can learn more about Presbyterian Music Camp at <http://pccweb.ca/musiccamp/> or on Facebook. On the website, you can also make a donation to provide bursaries for individuals and families to Presbyterian Music Camp through the Alison Stewart-Patterson Fund.

Editorial

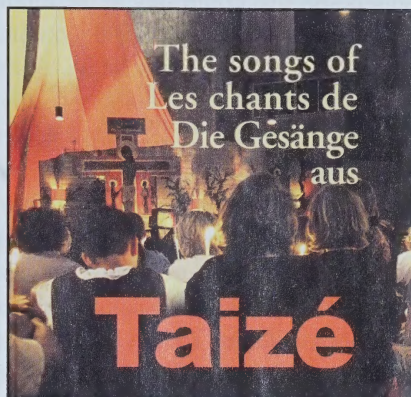
continued from page 3

- If you are member of a WMS group, consider one thing you can change to improve your group ... and do it! Are you spending too much time on business and not enough time on education and worship? Have you considered changing your meeting time? When was the last time that you invited someone new to your group? Should you consider a different format for your group? Perhaps you could invite all the women of the church to attend a gathering with a special speaker twice a year and just meet a few other times to deal with business. Maybe, you could meet in a common room at a senior’s home and invite others from the building to attend. Maybe your WMS group can start a mission study for anyone in the Church who is interested (many of you are mission experts!).

Finally, when approaching any new task ... don’t forget to pray. This summer, relax and enjoy the sun, and find ways in which you can make a difference!

The Songs of Taizé

The Taizé Community is an Ecumenical community in Burgundy, France, that works together to bring divided Christians and separated people together. One of the ways they do this is through song. Their songs are repetitive and sung in many languages so all can participate. One of the most exciting parts of the Taizé Community is that it brings thousands of young people together, from all over the world, seeking peace, seeking meaning, and seeking God.

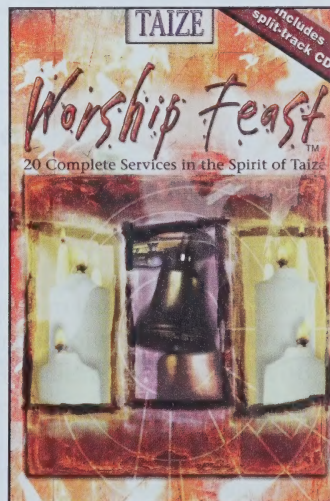


This little book (which contains three language translations) and CD gives a short overview of the community. It then contains short reflections, just a few sentences long, for reflection. But, the most important component is the CD. Whether you sit in silence, or sing along, you are transported to Taizé. It is great music to inspire you and allow you to be still and know God.

Worship Feast—20 Complete Services in the Spirit of Taizé

This book provides a very accessible introduction to Taizé for small groups. Although designed for youth groups, this book can be used for groups of any age. Each session includes opening songs (a split-track CD is included), a scripture passage, something to think about in silence, a closing prayer, and closing songs. Although the traditional silence is important in Taizé, for those who require more interaction, the ideas for silent reflection could also be used in group discussion.

As well, although this book is designed to be used in community, it can also be used for personal reflection. If your life is busy, this is a great way to spend your devotional time—in quiet reflection with God.



Various Song Books:

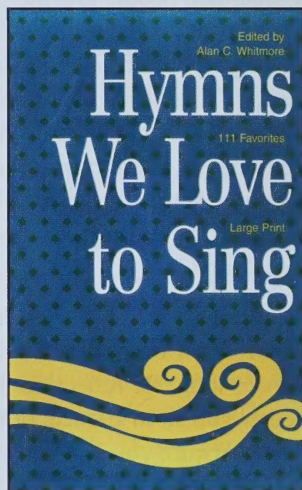
I don't know about your WMS group, but every month we need to carry hymn books into our meeting space to sing. How much easier to have some WMS songbooks that could stay in the room where we meet. Here are a few you can choose from.

Hymns We Love to Sing

Alan C. Whitmore, Editor

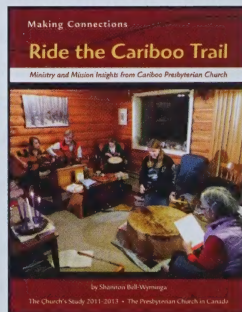
If your group wants to sing, but isn't sure where to get started, this is the book for you. This book is in large-print and is light-weight so it is wonderful for older groups, or for groups that might want to take their song books on a retreat. The book contains some Christmas and Easter hymns, along with old favourites like Spirit of God Descend Upon My Heart, Great is Thy Faithfulness, What a Friend We Have in Jesus, and Come, Let Us Sing of a Wonderful Love.

In addition to the traditional hymns, they have added a few of the newer favourites, such as Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness, and One More Step. So there is something for everyone. Note that this book contains no music, so if you choose to have musical accompaniment, you will need to find the music or chords elsewhere.



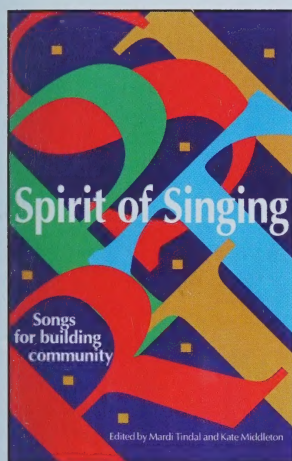
2011–2013 Making Connections Mission Study Now Available

Ride the Cariboo Trail: Ministry and Mission Insights from Cariboo Presbyterian Church explores lessons in mission and ministry from the experiences of mission staff serving in the Cariboo region of British Columbia. Shannon Bell-Wyminga shares insights from the house church ministry of Cariboo Presbyterian Church, and examines what it really means to be involved in both mission and ministry.



Spirit of Singing—Songs for Building Community

Mardi Tindal and Kate Middleton, Editors

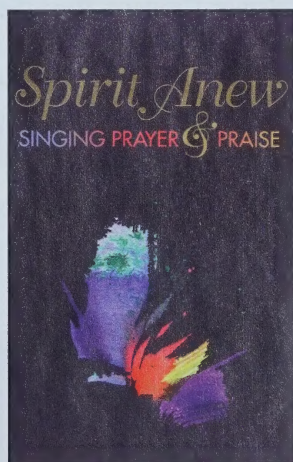


I would suggest this book if your WMS group is a little more adventurous, or if you want a book that is great to accompany your traditional hymn book. To me, this book would be wonderful for inter-generational events, Vacation Bible School, and retreats. Some of the lovely features of this book are that it contains sung graces (For Health and Strength, Be Present at Our Table, Lord); traditional songs (For the Beauty of the Earth, Amazing Grace); modern praise songs (One More Step, I've got the Joy, Joy, Joy); and fun secular songs (There's a Hole in the Bottom of the Sea, Land of the Silver Birch, Farewell to Nova Scotia). This book includes music for the melody line, and also guitar chords, though many of the sings could be sung with no musical accompaniment.

Spirit Anew—Singing Prayer and Praise

Alan C. Whitmore, Editor

This book is a collection of prayers, put to music. The traditions are varied, Iona Community, Taizé, African-American Spirituals, but most have a repetitive nature to them and the suggestion is that they are sung without musical accompaniment. I would likely love singing from this book, with a good leader/teacher to help me learn. As well, since these are all sung prayers, this book is not as versatile for regular use. However, if your group loves to sing, can read music (or have a strong musical leader) and are looking for a more liturgical approach to their meeting times, this might be a unique book to try out.



THE
Book Room

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Mission In Action

Brian Johnston

Cluj, Romania

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to report that nine choir members from the Institute's male choir and I had a super excursion to two villages close to Beius/Belenyes in the Western Carpathian area of Romania.

We arrived in the first village just in time to participate in the evening worship, which was part of a week-long prayer celebration. Szabo Arpad, a former choir member now serving as pastor in a neighbouring village, preached. On Sunday morning, Kelemen Csongor, from the choir, delivered the sermon. Both pastors of these villages were also choir members going back to the time when the male choir was founded in 1996. Attila and





Szabo Arpad

Zoli arranged wonderful hospitality for us and we shared our faith through song to about 400 people.

It is always rewarding for me to witness the fine work that former choir members are doing throughout Transylvania. Both of these pastors were not only great hosts, but they truly inspired my present choir members.

Once again we thank all the Canadians, who support Presbyterians Sharing, allowing my dedicated theological students and I to continue sharing the gift of music throughout Romania.

David Pandy-Szekeres Eastern Europe

On December 12, from Sarospatak in Hungary, we embarked on our day with a fully-planned program in hand. David's fellow travellers today were

his wife Anna and the Rev. Daniel Szabo. After two hours of driving, we crossed the Hungarian-Ukrainian border to arrive in the sub-Carpathian Ukraine area, where the majority of the mission worksites David is involved with are found.

Of the county's 1.38 million inhabitants, 85,000 are members of the Reformed Church of the sub-Carpathian Ukraine (RCCU). It is within the framework of this church's activities that David carries on his duties as a PCC missionary.

Our first stop was the town of Nagydobrony, which constitutes the largest Reformed Church community in the sub-Carpathian Ukraine. The Reformed Church Secondary School

Overseas Staff Birthdays



August

- 6 – Michael Birks, Nicaragua**
- 9 – Paul McLean, Taiwan**
- 13– Ed Hoekstra, Malawi**

September

- 16– Denise van Wissen, Nicaragua**
- 27– Christine Marie Allison, Cameron**

October

- 6 – Debra Burns, Malawi**
- 8 – Nelson Zuniga, Nicaragua**
- 11 – Margaret Evans, Kenya**

of Nagydobrony, the RCCU Children's Home (orphanage), and the RCCU-associated kindergarten and help-school for Roma/Gypsy children are all located here.

A habitual stop is the former bishop László Horkay's home, where we are regularly welcomed with warm tea, food, and an update of the latest events in the church and school community.

Laszlo Horkay showed us the new addition to the school, which will house a kitchen and cafeteria on the ground floor, and the present kitchen and cafeteria which is a small hike from the school building. The second floor will eventually be used as student dormitory space once the necessary finances can be assembled.

We also visited a former state farm building, which has stood unused for

... and the Turul spreads its wings again ...

For one to grasp the meaning of this *in medias res* title¹, first of all I should start by explaining about the Turul. The Turul is the most important bird in Hungarian mythology as it plays the role of the divine messenger in the genesis myth of the Hungarian people. It perches on top of the tree of life, along with other spirits and unborn children in the form of birds. Having explained this, I should also mention that the Hungarian people keep the image of the Turul in their collective consciousness as a symbol of their national identity. Thus, the erection of any statue or monument depicting this mythical creature is a gesture that expresses this identity. This is why it had always signified a threat to the local Romanian population. This historical context enables the reader to ascertain the fact that this unveiling was not a simple inauguration, but rather a symbolic expression of an oppressed minority's national identity, in a socio-political context where this minority has to cling on to any such element that could be perceived as a binding factor in preserving anything that can be called "Hungarian."

The unveiling of the Turul statue that had originally been destroyed in 1945 and subsequently returned to its rightful place by the community of the small Romanian village of Várkudu in Beszterce County, was done by Lezsák Sándor, the vice-president of the Hungarian parliament. The ceremonial commemorative service was held by Kató Béla, vice-bishop of the Reformed Church in Transylvania, based on Psalm 90, verse 15.

The presence of these outstanding public figures further underlined the importance of the event. Our octette tried to contribute to maintaining this ceremonial aspect

years and then became the property of a private foundation dedicated to supporting church causes. A kindergarten for Roma/Gypsy children has been launched and continues to operate despite its daily struggles with finding adequate financing.

We also met with Gizella Kupas, who 25 years ago, with Bible in hand, went out to the two Roma/Gypsy encampments at either end of Na-

gydobrony. Working alone at first, then with others, she communicated the Word of God to the Roma/Gypsy communities. God has blessed this work and there is now a church, a prayer hall, two kindergartens, and a help-school serving and being regularly visited by the members of these communities. Two male teachers and a music teacher are among some of the educators, who work with the

of the commemoration service, and the members all perceived this as both a privilege and civic duty. We were happy to have been a part of this display of Hungarian pride, which oddly gained support of the local city council made up of mostly Romanian

nationals. This goes to show how two nations with tumultuous pasts can get together and celebrate each other's culture with a bit of understanding and mutual respect. Hopefully, this example of peaceful coexistence will help to dampen extremist national outbursts. This is why, in my opinion, we could all learn a lesson from the fact that the Turul was able to spread its wings again in the church yard of the Reformed church of Várkudu.

Thanks to Brian Johnston for submitting this interesting article from one of his choir students. Brian felt that the article spoke very positively about the Hungarian/Romanian situation.

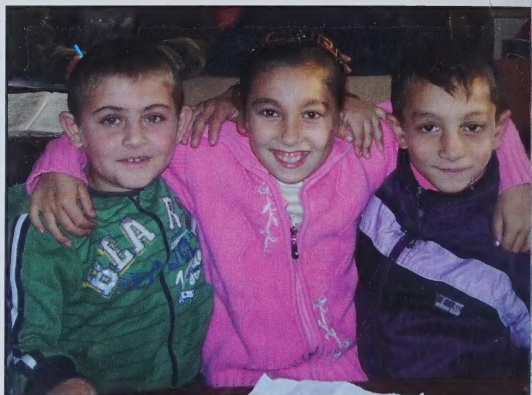


¹ *In medias res* is a Latin term that refers to starting at the middle, or even at the end, of the story instead of at the beginning.

Roma/Gypsy kindergarten children. Breakfast and a warm lunch are provided for the children.

We also met Sura Baksa, who teaches the fundamentals of the Ukrainian language at the help-school in Nagydobrony. The children use school supplies (pens, pencils, chalk, erasers, paper, notebooks, textbooks), which have been provided by the WMS and other PCC sources. At the help-school in Nagydobrony, we visited the mathematics class under the direction of their teacher, Csilla Balog.

Daniel Szabo spends his day working at the farm in Nagydobrony, which was established to provide food for the secondary school. It has received significant financial support from PWS&D and the PCC Hungarian congregation in Montreal. The farm also provides food to the local church-associated and Dutch-funded senior citizens' home.



We then continued on our way towards the town of Beregszasz. As it was wintertime, darkness set in early. At the RCCU church offices, we handed the mail from Hungary over to the caretaker, who was by then the only person there.

After a quick stop at the service garage to have winter tires mounted onto the van, we enjoyed a good cup of tea in the company of old friends in the town of Nagyberég. Joining in common prayer, we gave thanks to God for his mercy expressed in the carrying of the RCCU and its members.

As we headed back home, the peace of the approaching Christmas season settled onto the land. By the time we arrived at our house, our three children, Aron, Daniel, and Julie, were quietly sleeping and we gave thanks to the Lord for this day.

photos and text by Anna
Pandy-Szekeres





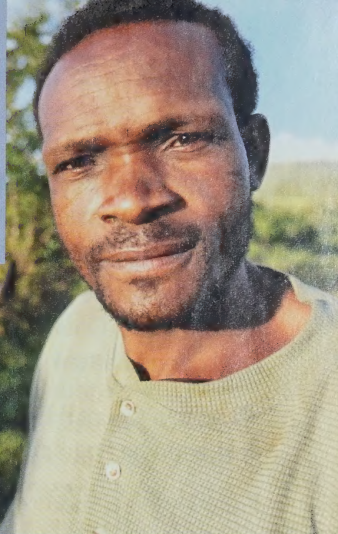
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Please help continue this important work today through your prayers and financial gifts.

www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd

The WMS ... Did you Know?

Did you know that there is a WMS Council that guides the work of the Society? The council is made up of representatives from the following synodicals/areas:

British Columbia: 4	Alberta: 2
Saskatchewan: 1	Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario: 2
Southwestern Ontario: 9	Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda: 11
Quebec and Eastern Ontario: 3	

As well, a Council Executive, which includes Synodical presidents, is in place to deal with the ongoing work of the Society.

Following is a short review of the most recent WMS Council meeting.

WMS Council

Your WMS Council met on May 19 at the Sheraton Parkway Hotel in Richmond Hill, ON. Although this was a condensed meeting, there a few decisions to note. First, we have decided to continue with our current Together We Can! projects for another year. So, there is still time for your group to promote the collection of funds for the health clinics in Gaza, or the refugee programs in Canada. (Contact the WMS office for resources on these two projects.)

We also had an update on the building of the Jobat hostel from our previous Together We Can! project. Building should begin in about a month and it will take 8–10 months to complete the hostel. A group from the WMS will go to India for the opening of the hostel.

We had a brief presentation from Presbyterian Women, the women's organization of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Their purpose is very similar to ours. They shared one of the projects that they are working on. They are selling baskets, and other items, made by the Roma woman in sub-Carpathian Ukraine. The baskets are made of local materials (reeds) and the women of the cooperative boil and dry the reeds prior to weaving them into beautiful products. The money from the sale of these items goes directly to the women! The representative from Presbyterian Women invited us to join with them in this project. We were excited about this work and have decided that we will consider this partnership with the Presbyterian Women and the details will be worked out.

We also agreed that we will celebrate in 2014! This will mark the 100th anniversary of the WMS.

Forward in Faith

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you, who support the WMS annual budget through your offering. It is your donations that help pay staff and support the ongoing work of the WMS.

Many of you, by now, have seen or heard about the 2010 WMS finances. You probably will know that each year donations to the WMS general account are strong, but they are diminishing. We see a drop of approximately \$30,000 a year, in recent years, of funds submitted to the General Budget—yet, this is only part of what we receive.

In addition to your regular offerings, we regularly receive special donations from a legacy left to the WMS by a former member or family connected to the organization. These funds supplement our general fund and allow special activities to happen. For example, the late Giollo Kelly's

estate provided funds so that the Giollo Kelly Memorial Leadership Development Fund could be created, and it also provided seed money for the Look In—Shout Out National Women's Gathering.

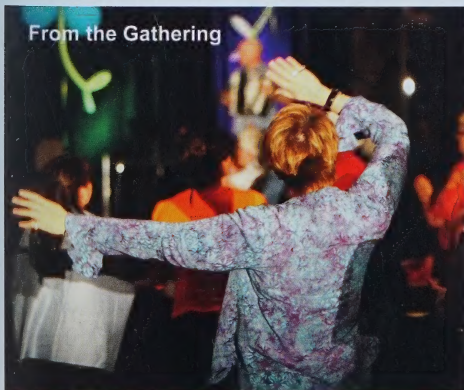
We have the Louise Reith Leadership Development Fund that allows Presbyterians or Synodicals to apply for funds to help them run special programs for their members. We also have the Children, Youth, and Young Adult Mission Fund that helps young people to go on mission trips or attend Canada Youth conferences. There are also several of these special and *designated* funds that allow for special ministry opportunities.

These special funds have allowed us to assist students in the Kandamall District in India to attend nursing school; donate to the Presbyterian Museum for their efforts to fund a part-time museum curator; assist Boarding Homes Ministry in the production of a training package; help the Cariboo Ministry set-up high-speed-internet; send Knox College students to Cuba in a ministry training exchange; and support many more projects over the years.

All these very worthy projects are in addition to the ongoing work of the WMS. Thank you all so very much! Keep up the wonderful work!

Janet Brewer, Treasurer

From the Gathering



In the Society

SYNODICAL

The Annual Meeting of the Synodical of **Quebec & Eastern Ontario** was held at the Presbyterian Church of Île Perrot, Pincourt, PQ, on April 16. The theme was Love in Action. The meeting opened with a hymn sing, led by Anita Mack, and Christine Ball led the Call to Worship.

Then Anita read the story of Mary Anointing Jesus' Feet and Christine read Jesus Washing the Disciples' Feet. Then, Christine and Anita dipped their fingers in a basin of water and made the sign of the cross on the hand of a lady. Each lady then dipped her finger in the bowl, turned to her neighbour and passed on the peace by doing the same.

The Rev. Luke Vanderkamp, minister of Île Perrot, extended a warm welcome and Joan Hilliard, Synodical President, constituted the meeting. Roll call was taken and the minutes of the 2009 Annual Meeting and the reports, except for the Treasurer's Report, were received. Several reports followed, including Presbyterial highlights from the past year.

Linda Gerry, from Montreal Presbyterial, gave prayers for local, national, and international needs, and Ruth Davidson asked the blessing for the hearty lunch.

After lunch, Catherine Blatch gave the In Memoriam using a PowerPoint

presentation. Jewels were placed on a golden crown for each WMS member, who had passed away in 2010. The hymn, When He Cometh, was sung, followed by a prayer.

Lois Klempa introduced the guest speaker, the Rev. Glynis Williams, who is Executive Director for Action Refugies Montreal (ARM). Her message was, we are all migrants on the face of the earth and the Bible is the handbook for people on the move. To refugees in detention, ARM provides legal information and emotional support. Glynis and her assistant, Jessica Rosales, were thanked and each presented with a gift by Ruth Davidson.

With Genevieve Holding as vice-president and Ruth Davidson as treasurer, Lois Klempa moved that the nominating report be accepted. Druse Bryan, WMS Past President, installed the officer and Joan Hilliard gave the closing prayer.

-Vivian Young

PRESBYTERIAL

The theme for the 97th Annual Meeting of the **Bruce Grey Presbyterial** was Expanding Our Horizons on April 7. On arrival, we enjoyed coffee and muffins.

President Dr. Elizabeth Wilson welcomed everyone and constituted the meeting with a prayer, followed

by the WMS Purpose. Then, Bonnie Hastings treated us to a solo. St. Andrew's, Owen Sound, conducted the Worship and In Memoriam, and reports were received and adopted.

Judy Morrow, of Burgoyne, showed some dresses made by Barb Bryce, a WMS member from Paisley (Barb was not able to attend.). Barb has a dream that every girl should be able to wear a pretty dress. So, Barb makes pretty dresses out of T-shirts and leftover fabric pieces. She has already made 731 dresses, which are distributed by people travelling to various missions, and she happily accepts T-shirts to help her make more!

Before lunch, the Rev. Anne Yee-Hibbs led us in a Bible study challenging us to Expand Our Horizons by the Grace of God. We need to move out of our comfort zone to witness to others and to develop non-Christian friendships, rather than

staying within our groups. Anne also installed the officers for the upcoming year.

Our afternoon speaker, Lindsey Hepburn-Aley, Mission Interpretation Coordinator for The Presbyterian Church in Canada, shared her experience of working with mission partners. She spoke of Eleanor, from Blantyre Synod, who is a home care worker; Alta Garcia, from Guatemala, who nearly died from eating tainted meat from the dump, and who once recovered, worked at the school in the dump; and Mercy, from India, who is a nurse working in the Community Health Program. Lindsay concluded that a small group of people can change the world if they want to.

Rev. Creole Simpson led the closing communion.

Maitland Presbyterial shared a delightful evening at Camp Kintail. (The camp is owned and operated by

President's Itinerary

June 27-29

Visit to Immigration Detention
Centre, Laval PQ

August 14-17

Annual National Convention
of The Catholic Women's
League of Canada (CWL),
Toronto ON



the Synod of Southwestern Ontario of The Presbyterian Church of Canada.)

The Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee, director, along with camp staff welcomed us with a delicious camp-made meatloaf dinner. After dinner, we toured the grounds. What a beautiful spot! There is a new outdoor chapel in the beautiful woods and there are a number of modern cabins with bunk beds for lots of campers. Then, we made our way to the beautiful sandy beach of Lake Huron. Following our tour we took part in an exercise to explore what it would be like to be a refugee. It was very enlightening to experience being part of such an unfamiliar ordeal. We have so much to be thankful for living in Canada.

Forty people attended the **Paris Presbyterial** Annual Meeting held at Knox Presbyterian Church in Embro on February 19. The theme was Peace. We were challenged to look at

the subject of peace within ourselves and in the world by the following: Margaret Vandersweerde and Helen Hart (who led the worship service), the Rev. Anne Yee-Hibbs (who led the Bible study on John 14:27), and our guest speaker, the Rev. Noel Gordon, (who spoke on the Palestine/Israel conflict in the West Bank). Susan McLennan and Joan Willsie led our sing songs. A Bring and Buy Book Bonanza offered a variety of used Christian books for purchase for the price of a donation. After three years of dedicated leadership and commitment as President of Paris Presbyterial, Susie Strickler turned the responsibility over to our new president, the Rev. Mark McLennan, the first male President for Paris Presbyterial.

Brockville Presbyterial met at St. Paul's, Winchester, on March 2 with about 30 in attendance.



Correction:

An error appeared in the Brockville Presbyterian submission for the May/June In the Society. Ray Pugeni's current status in Canada is as a temporary resident.

President Catherine Blatch conducted the meeting and Mary Moorehouse led worship based on the parable of the sower. Groups considered how they receive the seed and how it has taken root in their hearts to bear fruit for God. Ray Pugeni, from Zimbabwe, returned as our guest speaker. Ray is currently speaking on Farming God's Way for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The hope is that through better, and more sustainable, farming techniques, bumper crops will be enjoyed.

Brockville Presbyterian's May Rally was held on May 11. The focus for the day was Let there be Peace and Justice. Catherine Blatch opened the meeting with prayer and the Morrisburg group led worship in story and song. Synodical President Joan Hilliard was introduced and gave a brief report on the Spring Rally held in Quebec.

Following lunch, Annie Blaine, Eileen Chambers, and Ruth Bond presented a lovely musical selection on peace. The Rev. Samer Kandalaft, our guest speaker, enlightened us with firsthand information on the quest for peace in the Middle East. He is an immigrant to Canada, originally from

the area. He said that there will be a struggle as long as those in power, often dictators and their followers, do not hear the voices of the people. Pastor Samer now serves the people of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Kemptville. Mary Ballantyre spoke of learning about the conflict in the Middle East after many trips to visit her daughter and family, who live and work in the area. She has attended conferences put on by Sabeel, an Ecumenical organization that works in Israel and Palestine for peace, justice, and understanding.

Montreal Presbyterian held their 97th Annual Meeting on March 19 at Côte-des-Neiges Presbyterian Church, Montreal.

Ruth Ann Williams welcomed everyone, and the Rev. John Vaudry, the host minister, gave the history of the church and led devotions on the theme of the Women at the Well.

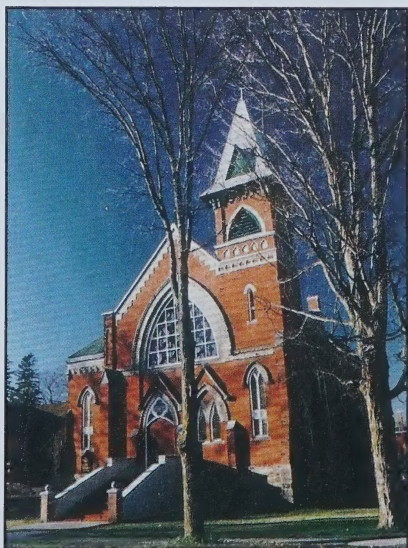
Linda Gerry, president, constituted the meeting, and Jean MacDonald, secretary, read the minutes of last year's meeting. Then, reports were presented, received, and adopted, and announcements were made.

After lunch, Peggy Wegrich led us

in an exercise break, and the Côte-des-Neiges ladies led in a hymn singing. Our speaker, Druse Bryan, spoke on the topic, On the Move—in Mission. She gave a history of the WMS and spoke of her travels as national president.

LOCAL

A wonderful celebration was held on April 6 to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of **Britton WMS**, Knox Presbyterian Church, Listowel ON, with 110 people attending. The group wore period dress to present a skit representing the first meeting, followed by a PowerPoint presentation with highlights from their history. The Rev. Wallace Little was the guest speaker and spoke on Mission Through the Years (His mother-in-law had been a member of this group.).



On October 7, 2007, Knox Presbyterian Church in **Cannington** Ontario burned to the ground—the work of an arsonist. The members were heartbroken to lose their 142-year-old building, but kept worshipping every week at the seniors building. The WMS met regularly.

Building a new church was out of the question for this aging congregation, and in the autumn of 2011, the members amalgamated with Beaverton Presbyterian Church to form Beacan Presbyterian Church (Bea

Photo: Knox Presbyterian Church, Cannington, before the fire.



from Beaverton and Can from Cannington), and are building a new church together.

The Knox WMS elected and were encouraged to continue to meet in Cannington monthly; it will continue to work hard to fill their commitment. Now that's dedication!

On March 23, the ladies of the former Knox Presbyterian Church in Cannington hosted the **Lindsay Presbyterial** Spring Meeting. Ruth Anderson and Angie Young, members of Wick WMS, continued with the very fitting theme from our January meeting, A Future and a Hope.

Photo: Carolyn Wilkins with one of the many posters displayed at Knox Burlington when the Margaret Taylor Evening Auxiliary hosted Mission Awareness Sunday.



Certificates 2010

Honorary Membership Certificates

June Hill
Evelyn Matthison
Avonton, ON

Hazel McCreath
Goderich, ON

Shirley Cossit
Listowel, ON

Twyla Jacklin
Molesworth, ON

Joan Massey
Huntsville, ON

Eva Powrie
Toronto, ON

Brenda Adamson
Etobicoke, ON

Certificate of Recognition

Margaret Nagai,
Vancouver, BC

Gordon Watt
Barrie, ON

Leila Naomi Dixon
Port Carling, ON

Kalista Clement
Colleen Farrell
Dana Lynn Farrell
Kingston, ON

Catherine McEachern
Woodville, ON

Savi Bandy
Willowdale, ON

Circulation News

We just finished a wonderful weekend at the National Presbyterian Women's Gathering. Each of the 550 participants received a bag at registration that included the May/June *Glad Tidings*. For those of you who were at the event and are already a subscriber to *Glad Tidings*, we encourage you to pass this magazine on to someone who isn't aware of *Glad Tidings*, and of the wonderful work of The Women's Missionary Society. Through this, we hope to attract a few new readers! And, as always, we appreciate all you do to promote the magazine.

Just a reminder that if the *Glad Tidings* secretary/contact person for your congregation has changed, please contact me by mid-July. This ensures that the summer mailing will reach the correct person and that your subscription will be quickly processed.

Katherine Allen

Life Membership

Kay Stevenson
Marilyn Leathley
Burnaby BC

Jean Scott
Allenford ON

Andrea Mann
Proton Station ON

Mary McKay
Leamington ON

Jean Borthwick
Burlington ON

Marion Hurren
Dundas ON

Clara Hamilton
Goderich ON

Joyce Pritchard
Petrolia ON

Brad Wyzille
Patricia Wyzille
Sarnia ON

Elinor Hay
Jean Horne
Margaret Langman
East Oro ON

Helen Austin
Arvina Bennett
Cory Eygenraam

Hendrika Rus
Huntsville ON

Anne Dutton
Gananoque ON

Ruth Bialek
Kingston ON

Greta Constable
Fae Quinn
Arlene Tenhove
Kirkfield ON

Barbara Breckles
Stouffville ON

Genevieve Holding
Dorval QC

Eleanor Carmichael
Goforth Auxiliary WMS,
St. Paul's Presbyterian,
Kemptville ON

Mrs. Ida Murphy
St. Andrew's WMS,
Lindsay ON

Netta Brandon
New St. James WMS,
London ON

Irene Watson
Daughters of Knox, Knox
Presbyterian, Acton ON

Agnes Story
St. Andrew's Presbyterian
Church, Arnprior ON

Marion Otto
Agnes Tolmie Evening
Auxiliary WMS,
St. Andrew's Presbyterian,
Southampton ON

Anna Mae MacDougall
South Kinloss WMS,
Lucknow ON

Mrs. Margaret Mary Hall
Josephine Nixon Grace
Stone WMS, Westminster,
Sault Ste. Marie ON

Helen Duncan
Almonte WMS, Almonte
Presbyterian, Almonte ON

Remembering

Planting Seeds of Hope for Generations to Come

How Planned Gifts Are Growing
the Church and Its Mission



provisionaries
Planting seeds of hope for generations to come

Did you know that the Synod of Saskatchewan has its own oil well? The oil well was a planned gift made to the synod, and the royalty income generated by the well helps to fund camping programs such as the Canoe Camp held each July at Camp Christopher. Your synod doesn't have its own oil well? Not to worry. Your planned gifts could help establish an endowment fund — a kind of perpetual oil well — at any of the seventeen Presbyterian camps across Canada, to provide fun and life-changing experiences for children and young people year after year.

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Glad Tidings

September/October 2011





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Glad Tidings

September/October 2011

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Timing is Everything



Thank you to all of you who filled out your survey from the May/June *Glad Tidings*. I enjoyed reading through your comments, and especially hearing from some old family friends. If you have not filled out your survey, it's not too late. And, your comments and suggestions are always welcome, so please keep in touch.

As well, thank you for your feedback on the May/June 2011 *Glad Tidings*. Most of your comments were very positive regarding both

the articles and the 'refreshed' design. A special 'thank' you goes out to Alexis McKeown for the new look!

The article that created the most 'buzz' was the one by Elizabeth May. Some were pleasantly surprised that she would take the time to write for *Glad Tidings* and found it interesting to learn more about her. One phone call did express concern—that she had been included and also because of the timing of the article. It is interesting to note, that May was asked to write the article almost three months before the federal election was called on March 26. By the time the election was called, the May/June *Glad Tidings* had been edited, designed, and was going through the final steps of preparation for printing. (Had it been earlier in the process, I likely would have held off on the printing of this particular article.)

Timing also makes writing an editorial a funny thing. Summer seems to have just begun, yet I am putting the final touches on the September/October *Glad Tidings*. So, instead of focusing on the Fall, I will focus on Thanksgiving. I give thanks for the week that has passed—a wonderful cottage week filled with family, sunshine, ice cream, and canoeing in the Muskokas. I give thanks to all those who wrote for this edition of *Glad Tidings*. The articles educated me, and I trust that they will provide new insights into the Healing and Reconciliation work that is being undertaken through individuals, congregations, camps, and the government.

As you begin to watch the seasonal changes that are occurring around you, take a moment to give thanks. And don't forget to say, 'thank you', to God and to those in your life that surround you with love whatever the season!

Partners in Healing and Reconciliation

adapted from a report by Sandy Scott

Many talk about making a difference, but St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Prince Albert, is making a difference.

In this report, you will hear how St. Paul's is making a difference in healing and reconciliation with the Aboriginal people in their area.

Prince Albert is a community whose history and heritage are inextricably tied to the First Nations and Métis people, and to the Presbyterian Church. The community was founded in 1866 by a Presbyterian missionary, the Rev. James Nisbet, and his party from the Red River settlement. Nisbet's party included strong women like his wife, Mary Nisbet, and her sister, Christina McKay, who was married to John McKay. John McKay was Métis, a renowned Buffalo hunter, could speak Cree, and was well respected by the Métis and First Nations people. He

was later ordained and became the first minister to serve the Mistawasis First Nation. Also joining the party was George Flett, who through his mother Peggy Cardinal, was related to five Great Plains chiefs. Flett, who was also later ordained, could speak English, French, Cree, Saulteaux, and Gaelic, making him invaluable to the mission, particularly at its founding. All of these committed Christians helped to found Prince Albert with a vision of building a community in which First Nations, Métis, and non-Aboriginal people can live together in peace and harmony.

Today, Prince Albert is a northern community of about 40,000 people, who among other things provide commercial and government

services to Saskatchewan's northern population of about 150,000. In Prince Albert, 40% of the population is First Nations or Métis, and within ten years it is expected that this figure will attain 50%. We have a young community: 50% of the population are under the age of 35 years and 25% under 18. The fastest growing ethnic groups in this city, and the north, are First Nations and Métis people. The social and economic challenges we face are typical of northern communities: these include insufficient housing; unemployment among First Nations and Métis people; inadequate levels of education and nutrition; diabetes; teen pregnancy; and addictions. In a community and area like ours, working to help foster good relationships between First Nations, Métis, and the non-Aboriginal community is a vital and essential ministry. And, because we have such a young population, it only makes sense to support and work with schools and other organizations to address the needs of the most vulnerable within our young population.

With the assistance of The Healing and Reconciliation Fund of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, we have been able to

reach out and build strong working relationships with two community schools, Riverside and Westview, and also with the Family Futures Program, which provides support and services to vulnerable parents and their families. This has enabled us to sponsor and take part in cultural events in our community that foster understanding and engage in social service ministry that serve people, particularly children.

The first healing and reconciliation project we undertook was with Riverside Community School. It was called Telling Founding Stories, which took place in September 2008. The purpose of the event was to tell the story of the founding of Prince Albert by Nisbet and his party alongside the stories of origin that First Nations Elders tell. About 90% of the student body at Riverside School is First Nation or Métis. During a school assembly, an elder from Mistawasis First Nation, Philip Ledoux, told personal stories and stories about his home community. Elder Stuart Amyotte spoke about his childhood and how the residential schools affected his parents and grandparents, his family life, and the



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THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA

community. Stuart spoke eloquently about the need to forgive and the importance of building relationships that are respectful and supportive. The Rev. Sandy Scott, from St Paul's Presbyterian Church, spoke about the founding of Prince Albert—the farm, school, and the community that Nesbit's party built and how their original vision was to build a community where all people could live together in peace and with security. Sandy also spoke about the Presbyterian Church's apology to First Nations and Métis people, and the Prime Minister's on behalf of Canada. Later in the afternoon, in the library, classes continued to hear about First Nations cultural teaching from Stuart Amyotte and more Prince Albert history from Sandy Scott. The day ended with a community meal attended by about 250 people, drumming, and a round dance. Many members of the St. Paul's congregation attended and were impacted by the event.

The Telling Founding Stories project inspired leaders from the church and school to do more. On Friday, March 20, 2009, the Healing and Reconciliation Fund, along with St. Paul's Church, and Riverside Community School sponsored the Building Bridges event. The purpose of the event was to provide

the students of Riverside School, along with many guests from the community, the opportunity to participate in workshops on cultural teachings and activities from the First Nations and Métis communities, and other cultures as well. The event was the last in a series of activities that took place in Prince Albert to mark "The Week to End Racial Discrimination" in March 2009.

Opening speakers at the event included The Honourable David Walden, Secretary-General to the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, Rev. Gordon Williams, Lori Ransom of the PCC, and other notable community leaders. The day started with words of welcome and prayers from the Rev. Bev Schapansky and Elder Stuart Amyotte. Students took part in three sessions through the day, that included workshops on Native drumming, African drumming, First Nations dancing, Métis storytelling, the common language of storytelling, fish scale art using porcupine quills and fish scales, Irish dancing, Métis jigging, step dancing, German culture, African culture, and more. Those who participated in the day-long event, especially the students and teachers, were energized by the experience. The day ended with a traditional feast.

Another event was the cultural camps held at Camp Christopher.¹ The

St. Paul's, partnering with the Healing and Reconciliation Fund and others, is making a huge difference in their community.

purpose of this project and partnership was to provide the students of Won Ska Cultural School, Riverside Community School, and Presbyterians in Northern Saskatchewan an opportunity to take part in First Nations and Métis Cultural activities in a wilderness setting. The cultural camps were a resounding success for all who participated.

The next cultural event that St. Paul's Church and Riverside Community School are hosting together will be a Pow-Wow to be held in the school in September 2011, funded by the Healing and Reconciliation Fund and the local school district.

In addition to the cultural events, St. Paul's also support a variety of community projects. Annually, St. Paul's Church works to send over 90 children and youth from Prince Albert to camp every year. St. Paul's Church does the fundraising and in 2011, its focus is on a sponsored triathlon that Rev. Sandy Scott and his wife Elizabeth participated in on June 16.

The schools, with the church,

recruit the children to go to camp. The vast majority of the children and youth are Métis and First Nations, and many would not get to go to camp without the support of their schools and the church. Each of the schools hire a summer camp coordinator to make sure each camper has the supplies needed to go to camp and transportation to get there. Families, campers, and classroom teachers all testify to the importance of the camping experience for their children.

This year, Camp Christopher will train campers who have been part of this program to take up leadership roles at camp. The Camp's program has evolved to accommodate the change by hosting workshops with camp leaders and First Nations Elders to learn more about aboriginal culture. The camp now more fairly reflects the make-up of the population and experience of Saskatchewan, especially in the north.

In the city of Prince Albert, the Family Futures Program provides support to parents and families who are vulnerable. In 2006, the Mission

Relationships are being built, and they are bearing witness to the healing and reconciling work of Jesus Christ.

and Outreach Committee of St. Paul's Church started a community kitchen in the church basement, with young mothers from the Family Futures Program. The Healing and Reconciliation Fund helped the project to grow in 2008. The Family Futures Program provides childcare, freeing moms to come to St Paul's Church, share a meal together, and then work with women from the church to plan, prepare, and cook a meal. At the end of the evening, after cooking and sharing together, the women get to take a prepared meal home to their families. The program not only helps young parents learn about nutrition and cooking, it helps build community and relationships. Some of the parents have ended up attending St Paul's and becoming active members.

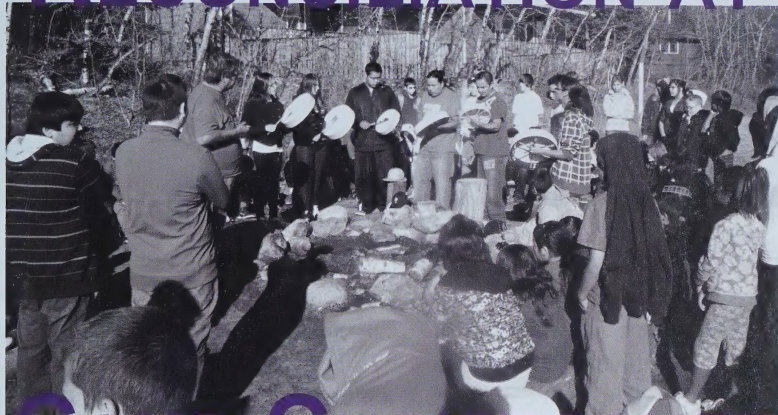
St. Paul's helps in many other ways too. One Saturday a month throughout the school year, volunteers from the church work together to

make about 80 litres of soup which is then frozen and taken to Riverside School to be used in classrooms and given to people in need. St. Paul's also works with the Community Room Coordinator and the Social Worker at Riverside School to provide emergency food hampers when needed. Through the annual Christmas Hamper program, St. Paul's and Riverside School help about 50 local families to have a more blessed Christmas. The Christmas Hamper program is strongly supported by staff and inmates at a local provincial correctional facility.

St. Paul's, partnering with the Healing and Reconciliation Fund and others, is making a huge difference in their community. Their journey has changed them. Relationships are being built, and they are bearing witness to the healing and reconciling work of Jesus Christ in a way that we believe has brought life and hope to our community.

¹ You can read a full report on the cultural camps in the article by Jen Bell on p.9.)

HEALING AND RECONCILIATION AT



CAMP CHRISTOPHER

by Jen Bell

In the gospels, Jesus says, I promise that when any two of you on earth agree about something you are praying for, my Father in heaven will do it for you. Whenever two or three of you come together in my name, I am there with you.

(Matthew 18:19–20 CEV)

Each year, Presbyterians come to Camp Christopher filled with the anticipation of canoeing to the legendary sunken kayak, roasting marshmallows around the smoky fire, tasting delicious food, and enduring unforgettable mosquitoes. Staff arrive ready to love selflessly, grow in community, and watch as faith is made real for them through the ministry of Christian camping.

Many of us wish camp could happen 365 days of the year, and that everyone could experience the magic of such a life-changing place in a setting only God could create.

Creating a safe place to grow in relationship is something that is naturally cultivated at camp, and

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so Camp Christopher is the perfect setting to bring diverse groups together. The students of Won Ska Cultural School and Riverside Community School in Prince Albert, joined with Presbyterians in Northern Saskatchewan, through St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Prince Albert, to come to Camp Christopher to participate in First Nations and Métis cultural activities. This was made possible through funding from the Healing and Reconciliation Fund of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, which has a simple approach—local church members and groups are encouraged to reach out and get to know their Aboriginal neighbours.

In the Fall of 2010, over 700 children, youth, and adults came to Camp Christopher over a four-day period to strengthen the relationship between their schools and the Church. The Creator blessed us with amazing weather and wonderful opportunities

for us to walk side-by-side as we journey to a time of true healing and reconciliation.

Students, staff, and volunteers all shared in a cultural camp led by local elders and teachers. Each day began around the fire, drumming and sharing stories. Elder Stuart Amyotte talked about his residential school experience and gave examples of how people work through trauma and pain towards healing and even forgiveness and peace. He acknowledged the work of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, and the hospitality of Camp Christopher, and spoke of the importance of working together as friends in spite of our history.

As well, the students participated in a series of cultural workshops. Students learned about the drum and its importance in First Nations community and life, talked about building a tepee and the meaning of



the poles (respect, love, kindness are bound together by trust), made dream catchers, built a small Red River cart, played 'Buffalo Games' on the beach, and found time to enjoy a traditional lunch of stew and bannock.

For me, the highlight of the day was listening to John Hanikenne, a historian and Métis Elder from Duck Lake. Using story and song, John spoke about how the Métis people came to be—their culture, the buffalo hunt, and why they live in this area. He also spoke movingly about his experience in a residential school and his happy memories of going to Camp Christopher as a child.

As we gathered together, aboriginal and non-aboriginal, it was impossible not to feel the spirit working among us. This post-apology event, as explained by Elder Stuart Amyotte, is a gathering of two cultures learning together—walking side by side. It is a chance to learn

from each other—and to move forward! Children came to camp for the event full of anticipation and excitement about spending the day exploring what the Creator has given them. Together, aboriginal and non-aboriginal participants, we shared in learning and leading. We watched as the magic of camp was made real for us again, but this time through cultural teachings, we experience some healing and reconciling through stories and within an ideal setting. The congregation of St. Paul's Presbyterian, Prince Albert, Camp Christopher, and Riverside School continue to walk alongside each other as we bear witness to the healing and reconciling work of Jesus Christ in a way that we believe has brought life and hope to our communities.

Whenever two or three of you come together in my name, I am there.

Jen Bell is Regional Staff for the Synod of Saskatchewan.

Truth and Reconciliation in Winnipeg

by Joanne Instance

I volunteered to work at the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission Event in Winnipeg, which was held on June 16–19, 2010. The event was held at the Forks, which is a historical area within the city with a long history with First Nations people. There are some wonderful stories of how they assisted the Selkirk Settlers when they first came to Manitoba.

Wearing a name tag and a T-shirt that identified myself as a volunteer, I was often asked for directions and in those opportunities, I often had some very good spontaneous discussions about what people had come to see and where they were from as well. Some things had to be moved around because of the weather and this made it very difficult for people to figure out the site, which was really very large and needed more signage and maps. I spent a couple of afternoons

in the listening tent, as requested, and had the opportunity to listen to stories and panel discussions in the Interfaith tent. Other than answering questions regarding the program or directions to another tent, I was not called upon to do anything further. The program was really packed and left little time for spontaneous discussion and sharing. The Learning Tent was very well organized and a popular one as people were anxious to see the pictures, and this tent provided a wonderful opportunity for people to get an introduction to the work of the TRC and history of the residential schools.

My responsibility was to assist at the PCC reception organized by the Presbytery of Winnipeg—in particular by the Rev. Peter Bush, who did a great job chairing the Local Arrangements Committee. Unfortunately, the weather was not good and thunderstorms with heavy rain prevented some from

This was the first National Event of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). It was planned as the first of seven events to be held across Canada within five years. The TRC says:

The national events will engage the Canadian public and provide education about the history of the residential schools system, the experience of former students and their families, and the ongoing legacies of the institutions within communities. The national events will also be opportunities to celebrate regional diversity and honour those touched by residential schools.

The Rev. Dr. Herb Gale, Moderator of the 136th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, was also present representing The Presbyterian Church in Canada at the Winnipeg event.

The second event was held in Inuvik, NT, from June 28 to July 1, 2011. "It's about Courage—a National Journey Home" was the theme. The Rev. Stephen Kendall, Principal Clerk; Mr. John Constant, Indigenous student at Vancouver School of Theology and worker at Flora House in Winnipeg; and Lori Ransom, Healing and Reconciliation Animator were present from the PCC.

attending. Several of the members of the Presbytery of Winnipeg were able to be present at the reception, and I personally had some great conversations with people, who had attended the residential schools and were very interested in the pictures and contacts they were able to make during the event. Not all the stories shared were difficult—some were good memories and they were anxious to share their stories and memories when seeing the pictures and displays. (I would like to see some resources

developed to include the history and information about the two PCC residential schools including some of the good memories as well as the denominational confession and our involvement with the TRC.)

The Opening and Closing ceremonies were well organized and memorable events for all who were able to see them. It was a good experience for me and one that I was pleased to be able to take part in and share with the many who attended.



Healing & Reconciliation

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF A MI'KMAW HEALING CIRCLE

by R. Lindsay Rankin

On a crisp and sunny Wednesday in early May, I made the approximately 200 km journey to the United Church Resource Centre at Tatamagouche. The Tatamagouche Centre is well known to both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals in the Maritimes and its familiarity with both appears to have made this event successful and meaningful for both groups.

It is to me, amazing, that I find myself at events such as this. Coming from the United Kingdom, I have no preconceptions of the historical basis, or arguments for or against early Canadian Government policies regarding Aboriginals.

At this event, I once again experienced the Blanket Exercise. I experienced it first at a KAIROS event in the Presbyterian Church of Saint David in Halifax, and again today, at the Centre. I cannot go into a lot of detail, but the Blanket Exercise was developed as a teaching tool to give non-Aboriginals the story of how colonization by Europeans, most of them from the British Isles and France, had dealt many social ills and injustices on the Indigenous peoples of Canada. The script for the Blanket Exercise was developed by Ed Bianchi, who is the Indigenous Rights Program Coordinator for KAIROS. If you want a very meaningful education on the history of how Indigenous Peoples were treated by the British

colonists, and subsequently by the Canadian Government, you need to experience the Blanket Exercise.

Each time, we gathered in a circle in a big tent—non-Aboriginals and Aboriginals together. This joining together became a time of healing. For those who felt wounded emotionally and spiritually, these were periods where hurt could be brought to the surface, where previously they had resided in the deep fissures of the soul. The healing ceremonies varied, but were led by the “grandmothers” acting as worship leaders. All objects of worship and all assembled are purified symbolically by the burning of one or more of the four sacred herbs—sage, sweet grass, cedar, or tobacco. The ceremony is also filled with prayer.

All of the different healing circles were conducted with great reverence, and at times I felt transported to a place of peace with both my surroundings and all who were gathered in the circle. In all of this, we were asked to commune with the “Creator” and with “Mother Earth.”

One of the most moving ceremonies for me happened toward the end of our stay at Tatamagouche. Beginning at one part of the circle, each grandmother hugged a participant, speaking the words, “Please forgive me for anything I have done to hurt you, now or in the past,” to which the person being hugged responds, “I do. Please forgive

me.” Those who had been hugged and who had asked for forgiveness then became part of the line hugging and forgiving others. It sounds complicated, but by now we were all at ease with each other and by the end of this particular ceremony, all had embraced and been embraced, forgiven and been forgiven. There were tears of joy and I had the feeling that we had all become one. For me, I believe that God was at

the centre of all that we achieved and tried to achieve in those three days. My resolve has been strengthened in doing all that I can in Christ-centred action to promote and support the church’s effort in healing and reconciliation with Canada’s Aboriginal Peoples.

R. Lindsay Rankin is a Lay Missionary with The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN A SUMMER MINISTRY

by Shelby Wyminga

For the past three years, I have spent time volunteering at summer camp, first at Ness lake Bible Camp, and then at Echo Lake Bible Camp. My first summer volunteering, the Summer of 2008, I was on work crew at Ness Lake for three weeks—washing dishes, cleaning bathrooms, and doing outside chores. The next Summer I returned to Ness Lake as a LIT (Leader in Training), and last year I spent my Summer at Echo Lake as a Junior Cabin Leader.

Spending time at camp helping kids and teaching them about Christ has been an amazing experience and it is always the highlight of my year. Echo Lake has a lot of campers coming from the nearby reserves and because I grew up in a native community, I feel a strong call to ministry with them. I intend to return to Echo Lake this year to volunteer for the entire summer.

As well, I will be attending Trinity

Western University in September. Normally, Summer volunteers at camp are not paid for their time, but because I will be attending University in the Fall, I have been encouraged to try and raise support for my summer ministry.

At camp, the days are long, sleep is short, and stress levels can sometimes get pretty high. It’s important that everyone on staff is able to work as a team and have a strong sense of unity, always putting God and the campers first. Prayer is a huge part of camp ministry, both our prayers and the prayers of others for the camp. Any prayer or financial support would be greatly appreciated by both myself and the rest of the team. We couldn’t do what we do without a strong support system behind us. Thank you all very much for your prayers. God Bless

Reprinted from A Northern Light, The Official Newsletter of The Cariboo Presbyterian Church.

My Place of Hope

by Donna Belisle

I did have a regular life at one time—kids, carrots, and a white picket fence—as I call it. We had most of the trappings of a middle-class lifestyle and I walked away from that to continue my drinking and drug career. My core belief was that I was not like others and did not deserve the love of others and that has haunted me for as long as I can remember.

When I was in a place where I had “burned my bridges” with those closest to me and with agencies that are supposed to help you—I saw a light at the end of my tunnel. This was and is the Anishinabe Place of Hope.

A couple of years ago, someone close to me entered A Place of Hope. I had the opportunity to visit and see first hand the cleanliness, friendliness, and the sense of community within this three-storey apartment building. The self contained bachelor apartments were a sight for bone weary eyes.

After much more self imposed abuse of all sorts, I finally reached out for help. I cried and quietly asked Jesus to come into my heart and help me. And He did. Decades of obsessive thoughts and actions of stealing, drugs, and alcohol were gone. I found myself with enough courage to go back to Susan and ask her for another chance to live at A Place of Hope.

You see, I had tried A Place of Hope a year before when I was still struggling with my obsessive thoughts and actions. I was attending college full-time and effectively (or so I thought) hid my struggles from the staff at A Place of Hope. I had kept my emotional distance and told them only the good news about my goings on. Like any effective support group, they knew different and understood they were powerless over the choices I made. They kept true to what A Place of Hope stands for—Safety, Sobriety, and Support. So, they evicted me.

It was unlike any eviction I have ever experienced. They were compassionate and offered me help, but more importantly hope. Still, I was not ready for the help and the hope. I went back to the street where I knew I belonged—not in a clean safe place where I was the only one using the bathroom and it was just me sleeping in the bed—not being lunch for any bugs would be a luxury I would miss.

When Jesus entered my heart, my attitude began to change. Hope replaced fear, love seemed attainable, and most of all I began to feel. And feel I did. After seven months of adjusting to being sober, I asked to come back to A Place of Hope.

It has been over three months and I am beginning to realize, at a very deep level, just how much I do deserve these people's help. I believe that Jesus has shown me that people do care and do put action behind their compassion, love, and support.

How do you thank someone for giving you a hand up (not out)? How do you thank someone for believing in you when you don't believe in yourself? What do you do when someone treats you with respect just because you are? How do you thank someone for their effort in keeping a clean, safe, and affordable home for you, especially in today's economy when social spending is going through another round of cuts? How do thank someone for the sleepless nights they must have to fight for funding day-after-day just so you can sleep safe and bug free? How do thank someone for their support and encouragement when they have only the knowledge that you are at the lowest point in your life and all but a sacred few will have anything to do with you? How or what is the right thing to do when they treat you with decency when you are only beginning to feel worthy of that? Day-after-day they come in and deal with people at some of the lowest points in their life and they turn and smile at you when you walk by! How do you tell them that they are true soldiers in Christ and are modelling how to grow, love, and be strong? How do you thank someone for helping you realize, feel, and begin to actually believe there are safe, helpful, and respectful people in life and not just in some far off distant land?

So how does A Place of Hope help me? Maslow's hierarchy of needs (in the diagrams I have seen) make safety, then physical needs, as the most important, as these are the foundation of human growth to self actualization. Simply put, I am able to live within a community that believes the marginalized have a right to love and to be loved—to be safe and cared for. They do not run my religious life; they model a walk with Christ/Creator that assures me the Holy Spirit is alive and well in the Winnipeg downtown core. They show me how to be the best I can be by letting me be me (whoever that turns out to be).

Glory to God and Praise His Ways. And if I can be so bold to ask, pray for and help those who show up with their human will and choice 100% ... and then allow the Holy Spirit to work though them!

Written by Donna Belisle who lives at Winnipeg Inner City Missions' Anishinabe Place of Hope in Winnipeg Manitoba. WICM is a mission of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and is a registered charity.



Children and Teen Programs at Winnipeg Inner City Missions

by Susan Currie

I am the Parish Social Worker for Winnipeg Inner City Missions (WICM), which operates Flora House, Anishinabe Fellowship Centre, and A Place of Hope. WICM actually developed the title of Parish Social Worker, which is similar to a Parish Nurse, though it does not have an official designation within the social work profession yet. Basically, what it

means is that I am a Registered Social Worker in Manitoba, working as a lay missionary with The Presbyterian Church in Canada. (That's probably worth an article of its own!)

At Flora House, during the school year we operate a Learning and Play Program (LAPP) for preschool children and their caregivers on Wednesday mornings, an After-school

Program for children ages 6–10, and a Youth Computer Program for ages 11–15. Over the summer, we operate a Day Camp Program for ages 6–15, where we take the children out of the inner city for a few hours each day. I am the supervisor for all of the Children's Programs.

Although I do not attend the After-school and Youth Computer Programs daily, I am available to their staff when needed. I am also called in whenever there is a family, child, or teenager in crisis. Our programs all focus on skill-based learning opportunities. Staff and volunteers provide tutoring in math, science, and English; offer cultural teachings; and provide opportunities to learn how to swim, play sports, and do art at Graffiti Art Gallery. A recent addition is an opportunity for children and teens to learn about healthy eating and safe cooking with a registered dietician.

Because of my past training as an Early Childhood Educator III, I operate the Learning and Play Program. I work one-on-one with each adult, teaching them how to play with their children in ways

that promote learning. I have found that some adults do not know how to play, and working individually with them is less threatening. I have also discovered that some parents do not know how to read, so I show them ways that they can learn with their child. For the past two years, we have also been lucky enough to have a retired teacher, who volunteers to work with the children. She is good with the parents as well and has earned their trust. Parents with children in nursery and kindergarten have seen huge



Photo: Heather Chappell

We teach skills and provide opportunities for learning that will build self-esteem and encourage our children to continue on in school.

improvements in their child's report cards.

For caregivers, LAPP is more than just providing children with learning experiences. It is a place to discuss the many social issues of living in poverty in the North End of Winnipeg. It is a place to come to get sound advice and not be judged. And it ripples—caregivers pass the information they learn onto other parents and grandparents in the housing complex where they live.

We believe that all children should receive unconditional acceptance and respect. We teach skills and provide opportunities for learning that will build self-esteem and encourage our children to continue on in school so that they will be able to break the cycles of addictions, violence, gangs, and poverty.

Susan Currie is the Parish Social Worker for Winnipeg Inner City Missions, The Presbyterian Church in Canada. WICM is a registered charity and can be found on the web at www.wicm.ca.

Winnipeg Inner City Mission's Director, Margaret Mullin, and Parish Social Worker Susan Currie, sing with children during Sunday worship.



Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry

by Stewart Folster

We have experienced a lot of changes in the work and ministry of Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry (SNCM) in the past three years. In November of 2008, we moved to our new building at 450—20th Street West, Saskatoon. Thanks to the generosity and care of Canadian Ministries/ the Vine, we were able to do a lot of renovations and repairs. And, through the sale of four Presbyterian churches in Saskatchewan that closed their doors, we were able to acquire some extra funding and make more positive changes to our building and our food program. However, we have seen a significant drop in donations from individuals in Saskatchewan in the past couple of years because we now have fewer congregations and a much smaller base of support.

Our food program is growing because the cost of living is quickly rising and all the social agencies struggle to keep up with the demand. At SNCM, we offer food, such as sandwiches, vegetables, fruit, muffins, coffee, and juice, twice daily and after Sunday worship. We also offer hot meals twice every Friday. Our Mission Support Worker, Chantal Dupuis, is

an excellent cook! She is currently working full time with us and helping us to develop programs and to plan for the future. I think she is one of the reasons why our food program is becoming so popular with the folks from the inner city.

Chantal is also available to lead Sunday worship and to keep the mission open whenever I have to be away on business or vacation. The Native people and inner-city people, who use our food program, continue to compliment us on the great work we are doing and they often express how much they appreciate the services we provide to them. Last year we spent about \$34,000 on food alone. Our fear is that, because we are spending more money than the donations we receive, we will one day have to shut down our food program. This would be a giant step backwards and would result in people going hungry.

Personally, I remember the few times in my life when I have suffered from hunger. My father was a fisherman on Lake Winnipeg and I remember a few winters when my family only had potatoes and eggs for food. In fact, I remember that my grandmother



take me in for a couple of months; however, they barely had enough to eat and were also having difficulty making ends meet.

So, I know what it is like to be homeless ... and hungry ... and desperate. Every time someone says to me, "Well, why don't these people get a job or don't they get enough welfare?" I want to just scream and show them five answers with a closed fist! It's not that simple. This is a complicated problem with a very complicated answer. No one seems to have that answer! Some of the inner-city people have been living on the streets all of their lives. They were raised by families that had very few support systems and no parenting skills and few, if any, life skills. The only life they have ever known is to be dependent on the welfare system. Their lives have been filled with abuse and addiction, and little hope.

Many of these poor souls will die on the streets and no one will honour them—some of them will pass on without any acknowledgement. They grew up without any kind of formal education and they learned to live a life of crime at an early age. The prisons are so full now that the government is calling for more and better prisons. Society gets rich on the suffering of Aboriginal peoples and on the suffering of the poor folk from the inner-city. Prisons, and the higher rates of crime in cities such as Saskatoon, create jobs for all kinds

decided that I should go and live with her because she didn't want to see me suffer. My grandfather was working on the CN Railway so they had money for food—he was the only Native person on our Reserve during my youth with a full-time job. There were many days after I moved in with my grandparents that my father came over to borrow some bread so that my brothers and sisters would not have to go hungry.

Another time, in the Summer of 1981, I found myself homeless on the streets of Winnipeg with no job and no money. I had failed my 4th year of university, and the part-time job I had with the Friendship Centre had come to the end of its contract. My uncle and my cousins were good enough to

of people in the professional fields of life. It's a sad situation.

At SNCM, we offer food to people twice a day, and eventually we establish a relationship of trust. Then we can invite them to come and worship with us. We serve food to about 200 people each day during the week. I hope we are alleviating some of the suffering and providing a place where people can get a few hours of rest before they have to go out and face the cold nights alone. Our Sunday worship has grown slightly since we moved into our own building. We have a regular group of about 20 people, who worship with us on Sundays and 20 or more, who drop in to worship with us occasionally. We can now say that we have a meaningful and spiritual gathering every Sunday that we can look forward to each week.

Thankfully, Presbyterians like to support food programs because they can see where their funding is being used and it is part of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Together, we are bringing the good news to the poor and we are helping people in their time of suffering. Presbyterian Sharing makes it possible for us to do this ministry and we thank all of you who

give generously to their cause. We also thank our twinning partners at St. Andrew and St. Paul Presbyterian Church, in Montreal, for their support. We thank the National Church and Canadian Ministries/the Vine and the Healing and Reconciliation Fund for their support and prayers. And we thank all the individuals and church groups, who have blessed us with their support over the years and pray that you will continue to remember us in our time of need.

I am pleased to give you this update and I wish you all the good blessings and peace of our Lord Jesus, as you continue to serve Him wherever you are.

Stewart Folster is an Ojibway from the Brokenhead First Nations in Manitoba. He is an ordained minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and serves as Director of Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry.



Worship: We Give Thanks

Some Reflections for those Preparing to Lead Worship

Mindful of the season of thanksgiving, this service of worship draws on the value held by many Indigenous peoples in Canada that we, as God's creation, are related not only to all the other peoples of the earth, created as the Bible tells us "good" and created in God's image, but also, as Indigenous Elders tell us, we are related to all that God has created in the universe, especially the great beauty of the earth, its flora and fauna, its lands and inorganic resources, the gases that make up our atmosphere, the waters, inland and oceanic, all also created "good" (Genesis 1). And, for all of God's creations we are called to give thanks.

This service in particular invites expression of thanksgiving for the gift of all the peoples of the earth and reflection on our relationships with other peoples and how we are called to relate to each other. Examples are drawn from relationships between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples, but these can and do apply among family members, neighbours, and communities. Any kind of relationship can be broken: hurtful actions, intended or unintended, call for a Christian response of love, compassion, repentance and confession, healing and reconciliation.

As we must love and care for our relations in the natural world in order to sustain our lives, so must we also love and care for our relations with other human beings.

Photo: Lori Ransom



s for All Our Relations

by Lori Ransom

Call To Worship:

Leader: O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all.

**ALL: You stretch out the heavens like a tent,
You ride on the wings of the wind.**

Leader: You set the earth on its foundations.
You cover it with the deep as with a garment.

**ALL: You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
Giving drink to every wild animal;**

Leader: By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation;
They sing among the branches.

**ALL: You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,
And plants for people to use,
To bring forth food from the earth,
And wine to gladden the human heart.
May the Glory of the Lord endure forever.**

(Adapted from Psalm 104)

Hymn: # 434, For the beauty of the earth

Photo: Lori Ransom



Prayer of Adoration and Confession:

O Lord, our Sovereign,
How majestic is your name in all the earth!
Creator of extraordinary nations of peoples:
Brilliant, colourful, dynamic, and spirit-filled,
Speaking a symphony of languages,
Dancing through life to rhythms melodic and syncopated;
In joyful-play, heartfelt-grief, excited-possibility, and patient-dedication
Your people, your miracle of life, revealing in their infinite uniqueness of
your own wonderful image,
We thank you and praise you for the beauty of the peoples of the earth.

We confess that we have not always appreciated how you have blessed us.
Instead, we have held fast to our frustrations and disappointments.
We have failed too often to recognize how we are blessed by family members,
colleagues, friends, neighbours, and all those with whom we share your
world.

We have reacted in anger, when we should have shown tolerance.
We have turned a blind eye, when we should have offered friendship.
We have made assumptions and criticized, when we should have sought to
understand.

And, we have even turned to violence, when we should have worked tirelessly
for peace.

Forgive us our sins, we pray, and help us to more perfectly love our neighbours,
and all your peoples, as ourselves.

Assurance of Pardon:

Beloved in Christ, our redeemer has reconciled us to God and has given us the
ministry of reconciliation, not counting our sins against us. For our sake, God
made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Christ, we might become the
righteousness of God. Thanks be to God!

Creator, Spirit, Holy God, shower all the peoples throughout all the earth
with your love and compassion. Give us strength, enthusiasm, energy, and
creativity to develop relationships and to build up communities of health and
wholeness, and nations of peoples who relate in love and generosity towards
each other.

And now as our Saviour taught us, we are bold to pray, Our Father, Who art ...
(The Lord's Prayer).

Hymn: #260, Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord

First Reflection: Sarah Laughed

Read: Genesis 18:1–15

Two distinctive themes are apparent in the story of Abraham and Sarah and their encounter with three men by the oaks of Mamre. First, we note the immediate, almost automatic, response of hospitality that Abraham offers to the strangers. They are given the best that can be offered—not yesterday's leftovers, the food which Abraham and Sarah can afford to put out for these unexpected guests, but the cakes made of choice flour, and the tender and good calf. They present the best of themselves to the strangers, share the best of what they have, giving thanks in so doing for the gift of the presence of the strangers among them, acknowledging the grace which can come from meeting new people and spending time together over a meal.

What have we given to the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis of Canada? Have we given of our best? What kind of communities have we established for them under our treaties? What is the quality of life in these communities? What did they eat before we arrived? What do they eat now? What would Abraham have done?

What is possible—what is humanly possible versus what is possible when we look to God for help—is the other clear theme of this story. When one of the strangers suggests something that sounds impossible, Sarah dismisses what prove to be the stranger's prophetic words with laughter. That she and her aged husband Abraham can have a child sounds like a ridiculous notion, beyond the realm of logical belief. And yet she will bear a son, Isaac.

Sarah's laughter raises some questions. What ideas do we laugh at



**Tokens of Reconciliation
on Buffalo robe.**

today? In terms of our relationships in Canada, we sometimes hear laughter when people suggest reconciliation might be possible in our lifetime, that land claims disputes can be resolved, that we can come to terms with different ways of living in the same land, that we can radically advance the standard of living among Indigenous peoples any time soon. And yet God calls us to reconcile with others as we have been reconciled to God through Christ (2 Corinthians 5), and to pursue justice, tending to the needs of others. Do we, like Sarah, deny that we have laughed at such notions as impossible? Have we tried to hide our laughter at the suggestion that these seemingly intractable problems can be quickly resolved, that reconciliation can be achieved, and that we have a part to play? Or are we laughing with joy and hopeful possibility, believing that all things are possible, and we only need act with faith, trust, and belief that we can make a difference? “Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?”

Second Reflection: First be Reconciled

Read: Matthew 5:21–24

“Forgiveness is not sweet feelings.” This was said by Michael, a Non-Indigenous man, who attended a residential school in northern Canada. He said this in testimony to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, at its second national event which took place in Inuvik, The Northwest Territories, on June 28–July 1, 2011. “Forgiveness is a process. We are not machines. You can’t flip a switch,” he said.

As a child, Michael had lived in a remote Arctic community with his parents. As Non-Indigenous peoples, they had the option to choose where to educate their son. They thought that sending him to a residential school in Inuvik would allow him to get a better education than in his small community. “I remember to this day the feeling of abandonment,” he said, upon arriving at residential school. To the Indigenous peoples who also attended residential school, he said, “I hear you (survivors) speaking my story though I am not Native. Children should not be separated from parents. They were created to be in families.”

Along with many who attended that residential school, Michael was abused during his time there. He remembered an Inuit boy who befriended him, an ally to whom he could confide, and who would stand in solidarity with Michael when he was in trouble with the teachers. While his friend could do nothing to protect Michael physically, Michael described his Inuit friend as an invaluable source of comfort and strength. Michael said, “To be present, to

be a living word of love, the embodiment of love meant everything to me. My true friend will for me always be an image of Jesus."

Michael forgave his abusers, though he said to this day he does not know whether they truly repented of their actions, "We spread hatred if we fail to forgive; then hatred is compounded; hatred wins."

The reading from Jesus' sermon on the mount in Matthew reminds us that God wants us to make it a first priority to reconcile with others if they have something against us, whether we understand what they have against us or not. If we remember that a brother or sister has something against us, we are to make it a first priority to be reconciled. It's more important even than offering worship to God, leaving gifts before the altar, to be reconciled with our fellow human beings. Relationships must be our top priority. Our neighbours are our precious gift from God.

So in this season of thanksgiving, we remember with thanks that in Canada Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples have had a special relationship that has lasted over 500 years. We repent of the mistakes that have been made in our relationships, and we give thanks that we have an opportunity to make things right, knowing that with God all things are possible. We give thanks for the possibilities inherent in our relationships, how much we have to learn from each other, and how enriching good relationships can be. We give thanks also that in our relationships we are not alone: all parties to a relationship will contribute to its success. We can look to each other for ingenious solutions. Let's conclude our reflection on the giftedness of all God's peoples with one example of the ingenuity of Indigenous peoples.

At the Inuvik event, Looee Okalik, an Inuit woman presented a picture to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as an expression of her peoples' desire for reconciliation. The picture depicted three tools, which in Inuit tradition are said to be all one needs to survive on the land: a seal skin, a snow knife, and a flint stone. All one needs to survive?!

The sealskin can be used to make clothing, a shelter in the summer time, a buoy for fishing, material for transportation: a sled, a bucket to hold water, and a slide for children to play on.

The snow knife can be used to build winter dwellings, to slice meat, and to hunt.

And the flint stone can light a fire to create warmth, for cooking, and boiling water to aid not only for cooking, but for washing and cleaning.

The Inuit have used these tools from time immemorial. They identify who the Inuit are, and they have helped them survive for generations, making them agile, and fit for any season. Seal skin, snow knives, and flint stones: three remarkable things that are all one needs to survive in the Arctic; three gifts from the Creator God for which the Inuit give thanks. How remarkable are the Inuit, created in God's image, our friends and neighbours in Canada for whom we give thanks!

Hymn: #732, O day of peace that dimly shines

Offertory Prayer:

Loving God, in response to all the many gifts you have given to us, we present these offerings to you. We ask you to bless them to the well-being of individuals, societies, and all of your great creation, this good earth, to support your mission here and everywhere. Help us to use our good minds and good hearts to direct these resources to good uses that are pleasing in your sight. Amen.

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession:

Lord God in Heaven, we think this day of all those who have acted as loving parents in our lives—fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, whether they are related to us by blood, or related to us by the loving-bonds of those who have been our selfless caregivers, and have supported us faithfully and unconditionally. We thank you for them and ask you to bless them now and forever, in their lives on earth and in their new lives in heaven with you.

Bless all of us as we strive to be loving and responsible family members and true friends. Help us to give of ourselves to those closest to us, sharing our time and our skills, our comfort and solace, and our playfulness and humour, especially when they most need us. Take care of our loved ones and friends when we cannot be near them, encourage and sustain them, and encourage and sustain us in our absences and times of separation from each other.

We ask also that you help us support the work of healing and reconciliation in Canada. We pray for good relations between First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples and all other peoples who live in our vast and beautiful country. We pray for the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Let the Commission's community and national events, which seek to foster reconciliation, be signs of new life and new hope for all the peoples of Canada.

Lord, we ask you to bless, with a special gift of your healing power, all those who have felt pain as a result of their involvement in the residential school system, those who were children in the schools and those who taught and worked there, all those who are seeking wholeness, who are yearning for a deep and lasting inner peace, your peace, the peace that passes all understanding.

We lift up all of these prayers to you in confidence that when we ask for anything in Jesus name you will hear us and respond. Amen.

Hymn: #315, A mighty fortress is our God

Benediction:

Peace be with you, Jesus said. As the Father has sent me, so I send you. In Christ, God reconciled the world to himself and entrusted the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ and in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion and power of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. Amen.

The photos used in this worship service are from the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission National Event in Inuvik, Northwest Territories, June 28-July 22.



Photo: Stephen Kendall

The Bentwood box, that holds all the gestures of reconciliation

A Living Sponge

by L. June Stevenson

More often than not, I seem like a living sponge on my faith journey rather than a living stone. Being a living stone implies an outward motion of serving and supporting. Introvert that I am, I prefer withdrawing into my own shell and experiencing life from the inside out, absorbing what is going on around me.

My faith journey began when I was ten years old in a United Church back home in Cornwall, Ontario. Then, being a believer was simple: read and study the Bible, go to church regularly and practise what you learn. There are a lot of rough edges on this old turtle with the ravages of time. I hear as well as I once did, but now I just don't accept everything I hear and what I believe has changed considerably over the years.

Living on the reef is lonely when so many of your friends are churchgoers and at least seem to toe denominational theological dogma like ecclesiastical line dancers; and the rest of your acquaintances don't care about issues such as virgin birth and the resurrection of the body after death because some already consider these things nonsense.

I've done some heavy reading

these past few years and this aging sponge is saturated with information: information that many would term erroneous, misleading, and downright heretical. I suppose it was Tom Harpur's "The Pagan Christ"¹ that radically shifted the ground beneath my feet and caught me off balance. His comments on "our own potential for Christhood" and for "experiencing the indwelling spirit of God," I understand, even affirm, but to question the very existence of the stories of the Jesus of the Bible that I know, kind of blew my socks off.

Harpur says, "I will clearly document that there is nothing the Jesus of the Gospels either said or did—from the Sermon on the Mount to the miracles, from his flight as an infant from Herod to the Resurrection itself—that cannot be shown to have originated thousands of years before ..."²

Stories that express timeless truths around spirituality and religion predate Christ. Today, the bookstores highlight novels and works of non-fiction about circumstances before and after Jesus' life. From the thought of no Jesus to a Jesus who may not have survived the cross but who may have fathered a child, to a Jesus who

escaped death and lived a happily married life, the leap is easier when your mouth is still hanging open with shock. The books lining my book shelf include, naming a mere few, *The Jesus Papers* (Michael Baigent); *The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail* (Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh & Henry Lincoln); *The Resurrection of Jesus: The Crossan-Wright Dialogue* (edited by Robert B. Stewart); and *The DaVinci Code* (Dan Brown), and the works of its many critics.

Many facts and theories are questionable but at some point it is naïve to ignore what contemporary Biblical scholars like Alvin Boyd Kuhn and Dominic Crossan are writing, as well as what some of

enlightenment, is often elusive. Pontius Pilate's question, "What is truth," is the question we all ask, and like Pilate, we may stand before truth personified and not recognize it. Truth is something we need to claim for ourselves. With truth comes the mystery that is beyond human ability to understand. At the heart of mystery is grace, creative outgoing love that accepts us as we are. It's an existential conundrum. David Friedrich Strauss says, "The supernatural birth of Christ, his miracles, his resurrection and ascension, remain eternal truths, whatever doubts may be cast on their reality as historical facts."³

Truth, for me, is found in the very centre of my being, that place

Through his own example, Christ showed us how to enter into the pain and the struggle of life and to encounter our true selves.

the earlier great thinkers like Albert Schweitzer, Joseph Campbell, or Carl Jung, have determined from their extensive studies. Some may refuse to read any of these books for fear their faith will be threatened, but something inside drives me to search, for myself, for new revelations, new understandings, to clarify my own beliefs in the midst of so much speculation.

Even in reading these books, truth, ever central to my search for

for which I search and question, and like the peeling of an onion, will one day reach the core and find nothing there but pure being. That being, for me, is God, or Spirit, or the Christ within. Did not Paul affirm, "We have this treasure (Christ within) in clay jars."⁴

Coming face to face with myself I find the truth of my life. Afraid of such intimacy, I may cry, "Who are you?" and the answer echoes back in the rustle of butterfly wings that settle

on my heart, “I am who I am.”⁵ The “dark night of the soul” to which St. John of the Cross alludes, is rewarded at its journey’s end by discovering that God dwells in the soul, a place that neither the Devil nor the Angels can penetrate. If one’s journey is always towards the light of God’s presence, will that not lead us into truth?

Did Jesus not say that the kingdom of heaven is within? Did he not also say that in order to love others we need to love ourselves first, and does not loving ourselves mean *knowing* ourselves, and doesn’t that ultimately mean *knowing* God? When Jesus says that we must be born again he is saying we need to die to ourselves, that is to be selfless. In being ‘selfless’ our divine nature shines through. Through his own example, Christ showed us how to enter into the pain and the struggle of life and to encounter our true selves.

The philosopher Soren Kierkegaard said that we could only be truly human through the process of *becoming*. Kierkegaard believed that one should “find a truth which is truth

for me”⁶ and that the only place we can find God is in inwardness.

The events of 9/11 changed the perspective of the world’s population irrevocably. Learning to define *who* is God and *what* truth is for us today are questions we can no longer avoid addressing. How will we know the answers unless we open ourselves to new understandings and new revelations of the Spirit? A church that is reformed and reforming cannot remain in the waters of stagnant doctrine and dogma.

I know that I am not alone. There are others in the pews that are uncomfortable with what is preached in some churches. For me that discomfort is experienced as the wind of the Holy Spirit moving through me, unsettling me. It moves me, not farther from, but closer to God.

Like sponges one needs to be flexible, light and absorbent, taking in what is necessary and expelling what is irrelevant, so that the journey of faith is ever a journey towards truth. When we grow, as God’s people, we are then moved to be those “living stones,”⁷ upon whom God’s church is built.

¹ The Pagan Christ by Tom Harpur, Thomas Allen Publishers. 2004

² *ibid* p 10

³ The Resurrection of Jesus: The Crossan-Wright Dialogue. Edited by Robert B. Stewart. Fortress Press. 2006

⁴ 2 Corinthians 4:6–7 NRSV

⁵ Exodus 3:14 NRSV

⁶ Soren Kierkegaard: An Authentic Life. Text & Photos by Ben Alex. Northstone. 1997. P 12 (Journals, Gilleleje, August 1, 1835)

⁷ Peter 2:4 NRSV



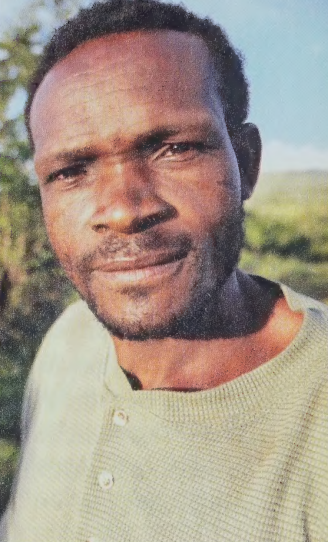
Presbyterian World Service & Development

The development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

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The WMS ... Did you Know?

This edition of the WMS ... Did you Know? focuses on two important areas of work that the WMS undertakes. The first is the Together We Can! projects. Every year or two, the WMS Council selects two special projects that they encourage WMS groups, individuals, and congregations to support, and this year one of those projects is the work of Action Réfugiés Montréal (ARM).

Secondly, an important part of the ministry of the WMS is mission education and one way that the WMS educates its members is through Mission Exposure Trips. This June, the WMS hosted a Mission Exposure Trip to see the work carried out by ARM. The following is an article submitted by those who participated in the trip.

Mission Exposure Trip: The Work of Action Réfugiés Montréal

The work of Action Réfugiés Montréal (ARM) was chosen at the WMS Council meeting in 2010 as one of the two projects promoted across the church as Together We Can! projects. Many of us have heard the Rev. Dr. Glynis Williams, Executive Director of ARM, talk at some local meeting and have learned something of this valuable work among refugees to Canada. However, in the last week of June 2011, an opportunity was given to five WMS members to visit the offices of ARM and the actual Holding Centre in Laval, Quebec, and to talk with a few of the detainees. It was a short visit—the equivalent of two days—but what a difference those days have made to our understanding of Canada's refugee situation.

Glynis was available to us throughout the visit, including mealtimes, and accompanied us to the Holding Centre. We also met ARM Program Coordinator Jenny Jeanes; the part-time office administrator, Jessica Rosales; and Ian MacDonald, their volunteer treasurer.

A three-hour session with Jenny introduced us to the complex refugee claim process in Canada. A refugee claimant's first point of contact at a land border or the airport is with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), or at an inland Citizenship & Immigration (CIC) office. Most are allowed into Canada and start the process of making their refugee claim. However, a small percentage of people are detained because they

arrive without documents or with suspicious documents. They are taken to the Immigration Holding Centre in Laval—virtually a prison. Canadian law requires regular reviews of the decision to detain, which are court proceedings. The review dates are 48 hours after detention, 7 days later, and every 30 days. The information considered has nothing to do with the actual merits of the refugee claim. Whether or not a person is detained, a refugee claim can take about two years to be heard although new legislation passed in June 2010 will speed up the refugee claim process, and will take effect in December 2011.

In Montreal, most people are detained because their identity needs to be verified. This involves making contact with their country of origin to obtain official documents. Many of them have left their country under extreme conditions that have traumatized them, and being held

in detention causes further trauma, leading to frustration, apprehension, and sometimes serious depression.

ARM is the only organization to visit the holding centre weekly to ensure that detainees are being treated fairly. The main goal is to provide detainees with accurate legal information, referrals, and practical assistance. ARM staff and volunteers explain the refugee claim process and ensure detainees have access to a lawyer. They pay particular attention to vulnerable detainees, like pregnant women or children. Practical support includes supplying phone cards to call home.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Red Cross have a role monitoring detention conditions, but they do not provide direct services to detainees, and only visit the Holding Centre a few times each year. Jenny keeps both of these organizations



If you would like to support the Together We Can! project or participate in a Mission Exposure Trip contact the WMS office for more information.

informed about specific issues of concern.

Jenny's role often focuses on helping the detainees to understand the requirements for their release from detention. She is not their legal representative. She may attend a detention review hearing, which provides emotional support for the detainee and afterward explains, in simple terms, what is happening. One detained Iranian torture survivor once called her "my guardian angel."

Prior to visiting the Centre, we met Bridget, a former detainee, who was seven months pregnant when she arrived in Canada in 2007. She fled her West African country, fearing for her life, and arrived in Canada using a false document. She was ordered detained by the CBSA officer at the airport, who told her they were taking her to a hotel to sleep. Instead, she was shocked to arrive at the Holding Centre, where she was held for two months until her identity was established. She explained to us her terror as she was placed in the "jail." She spoke of the regimen of being wakened at about 5:30 a.m. to shower and eat breakfast, while being watched by the guards. Because she was pregnant, she had trouble with the strange food, which

she couldn't digest and she was taken to the hospital several times. She feared for her unborn baby, and that she would be sent back to her country. She was released just 10 days before her daughter was born. After her release from detention, Bridget was "twinning" by ARM with a lovely woman, Maro, whom she still considers her friend. In Fall 2010, Bridget was deemed to be a refugee in need of Canada's protection by the Immigration & Refugee Board (IRB).

Bridget still remembers her terror. She says that even now she is frightened when she hears the sound of keys, reminding her of the locked doors of the Holding Centre. She was brought to tears as she explained her experience to us.

The Holding Centre is located off the island of Montreal, in Laval. Visitors normally would need two pieces of identification and be searched with a metal detector and have personal belongings locked up. ARM was able to make special arrangements for our visit. On arrival, we were issued with ARM vests to wear and promptly ushered into the visiting room. Jenny had arranged for three African men to meet with us. We asked them how they were managing and what life in

the Holding Centre was like. Their replies were similar—the difficulty of being detained; their fears of not being accepted; problem with institutional food and routines; their embarrassment of being in ‘prison;’ fear of being transported for hearings and other events in armoured vehicles in handcuffs and sometimes leg shackles; shock at their situation when they felt they weren’t criminals; desires for a new life—and always, their thanks for Jenny’s help!

At the end of visiting hours, we left with heavy hearts as we watched one of the men walk slowly across the yard back to his dormitory—watched by a guard inside the chain link fence topped by barbed razor wire—a prisoner!

Our visit concluded by meeting Denise Otis, the UNHCR Legal Officer in Montreal. Denise reminded us that however clean and humane a detention centre may be, it is a serious act to deprive a person of their liberty. She made reference to The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, stating that “Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.” She

described the excellent relationship with ARM, and how Jenny is the ‘eyes and ears,’ which greatly helps UNHCR’s work of monitoring. She applauded their work of advocacy, making special reference to it being an organization that brings humanity to some of the most vulnerable people in our world.

We left Montreal with our heads bulging and sometimes with more questions than answers. The biggest question is “How can we help?” Your support of Together We Can! will mean that Action Réfugiés Montréal can continue to support the people in the Holding Centre and will also lead us all to be more aware of the situation and spur us on to advocacy. We hope you will help!

Submitted by Catherine Blatch, Janet Brewer, Druse Bryan, Sarah Kim and Joan Smith (with assistance from the Rev. Dr. Glynis Williams and Jenny Jeanes).



Reviews

Ride the Cariboo Trail: Ministry and Mission Insights from Cariboo Presbyterian Church.

by Shannon Bell-Wyminga

The Cariboo is a vast region of forests, ranches, reserves, scattered communities, and people in the Central Interior of British Columbia. The Cariboo Chilcotin area covers over 80,000 square kilometres with an overall population of about 70,000 people. There are three large communities in the region—100 Mile House (2,000), Williams Lake (12,000), and Quesnel (10,000). The rest of the population is spread throughout the area on ranches, First Nations reserves, and in small villages and communities. Many people drive an hour or more to a larger centre for groceries, fuel, medical care, recreational facilities, and even schools. A good number of these people are hours away and live beyond the reach of hydro, phone, and gas lines; they must meet their own needs for heat, power, and communication.

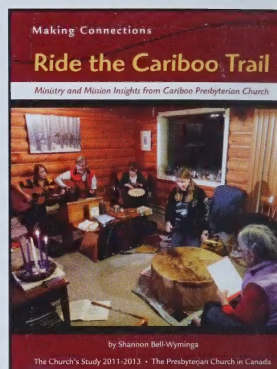
(reprinted from the study)

This year, you will learn about this exciting area and the ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in the Cariboo. The study includes great stories, great pictures, and even music—a beautiful drum doxology that you can be easily downloaded from the national church website.

The study not only teaches, but allows you to experience the ministry of the Cariboo. Due to distance, much of the ministry in the Cariboo happens in house churches. This allows those who live too geographically far from a church, to still have a Christian group that gathers, learns, worships, and reaches out. In this study, you will gather together to worship, learn, and reach out.

I love this study because although it is suitable to be used with a WMS group, I think it could be amazing done in an intergenerational group. There are lots of visuals, and lots of choice in music including both traditional and contemporary selections—however, Shannon does encourage groups to try some of the new suggestions. And, if you involve some younger participants, they just might be able to help out if you want to project the visuals on a wall, or use some of the more contemporary music!

This study could even involve children, or you could supplement the study with the children's study on the Cariboo, A Mission/Learning Experience for Children and Youth—Katelyn's Cariboo Adventure: Meeting Partners in Cariboo Presbyterian Church.



Mike Burns

PCC Young Adult Intern

CEPAD (The Council of Protestant Churches in Nicaragua)

I have just started working with a community banking project that is a micro-finance project meant to empower women by giving them greater earning potential and thus greater control over household resources by helping them to initiate small profitable businesses. The underlying assumption is that women are more financially responsible than men insofar as women give higher priority to the family and so getting money in the hands of women will result in the greatest benefit for the entire household.

The project involves seven rural communities around Matagalpa: El Guineo, Las Mesas Sur, El Balsamo, Matazano, Payacuca, Monte Verde, and El Castillo. In each community, there is a group of five women who form the individual banking groups, this is the 'solidarity group.' However, each 'solidarity group' is partnered up with at least one other community to create the actual 'bank.'

There have been three workshops held so far to introduce the project to the women, to organize them, and to get all of their paperwork for loan requests in order. The most recent workshop is where I was given a chance to take more of a lead role. The first day was to be a workshop on

leadership and the second day was the filling out of forms. I was told: create a presentation on leadership; here is a 16-page document that you will need to cover; get ready to talk. The idea of leading an eight-hour workshop entirely in Spanish was intimidating, but I was continually reassured by the social technician that he would be there to help out whenever I needed it. All the information was there and all the activities were already outlined for me—I just had to put it all together.

I got the PowerPoint presentation finished and my outline for the day. It pretty much went well; the point was to get each woman to realize that they all possessed leadership qualities and that they would need to grow and use these qualities to make the banks and their businesses successful. They were a wonderful group and really made me feel comfortable and even applauded for me a couple of times. When the workshop had finished, I found that it had given me a lot to think about. I had studied a fair bit about micro-finance in university and there our analysis was always limited to questions like, do women really benefit? Does it target the poorest of the poor? Does it actually lift people out of poverty or just send them into a cycle of debt? Are these types of individual businesses really even feasible? I still have these questions, but there are some new ones which have been

TOGETHER WE CAN!



Council has decided to carry on with the two current Together We Can! projects. Your prayers and financial support will continue to support REFUGEES IN CANADA and GAZA STRIP CLINICS. To date we have raised \$8,956.03 for Action Réfugiés Montréal and \$ 18,765.42 to help women and children in Gaza.

added. Where do the women actually keep the cash from the loan? 3000 cordobas (US\$150) is a lot of money for most of these women to be getting all at once and many expressed fear about keeping that kind of cash in their homes for any length of time. How much personal commitment do these types of banks demand from the women? These are busy women—really busy women—and maintaining these banks will consume a lot of their time. How do you explain loan concepts, the principle, the interest, collateral, a written budget, and terms of repayment? These are women whose literacy and math skills are at a most basic level. Later when I described the event to a friend of mine he commented, quite rightly, that both sides had some knowledge gaps when it came to working together, they didn't understand interest or a balance sheet, but I didn't understand raising a chicken or growing maize. How much

was lost—and not just through the language barrier?

Some of the other things I noticed had nothing to do with micro-finance. First, if you are planning a meeting in a rural community—make sure to account for the bus schedule. If you plan on going until 6 p.m., but the last bus passes at 4 p.m., well then you're going to have to wrap up early. Secondly, holding a meeting in a building with a tin sheet roof during the rainy season will inevitably result in a lot of necessary shouting and me not understanding anything.

The next stage is approving the loans and distributing the money. It will be exciting to see how far people get before I have to leave and what the final result is at the end of the first phase; I'll definitely be staying in touch with this project!

(This article is printed from Mike's blog (<http://pccweb.ca/mikebirks>) and edited for length.

Presbyterial

St. Andrew's/Chalmers, Uxbridge, hosted **Lindsay Presbyterial's** Summer Rally on June 16. More than 30 women attended for a day of fellowship and fun. The day began with a welcome and greetings from the Uxbridge WMS and by President Linda Grace.

Continuing the topic, A Future and a Hope, Elsie Giles read the scriptures Jeremiah 29: 11–13 and Corinthians 3:5. Betty Bingham read the devotional, entitled Hope.

We then played the ice-breaker game called Women's Bible Names Bingo until the lunch break.

We were invited to the Fall Meeting on September 28 at Wick and the Autumn Adventure at Elim Lodge on October 15, before singing the closing hymn and the Benediction.

-Phyllis Davis

Barrie Presbyterial held their annual meeting on May 3 at Elmvale Presbyterian Church. Our theme for the year is Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by works, is dead, from James 2:17. Our president, Evelyn Horne, opened the meeting with prayer. Marlene Lambie extended greetings from the church and their WMS. The devotions were presented by Jean Horne, Marlene Morgan, and Lois

President's Itinerary

October 15

Autumn Adventure for Peterborough & Lindsay Presbyterial, Elim Lodge, Pigeon Lake

October 23

Thankoffering Service, Willis Presbyterian Church, Jarrat

October 27–29

PWS&D Committee Meeting, Toronto

November 3–5

Council Executive Meeting, Toronto

November 7–9

Life and Mission Agency Committee Meeting, Crieff Hills



Cullis, all from Oro Esso. We were reminded to be doers of the word as Jesus did.

After the reports were presented and accepted, June Campbell gave us an update on human trafficking. A memorial service for six women was presented by Jill Parry, and Dorothy Ruddell gave an excellent book review. Carolyn Woodrow led in prayer for various missionaries, and Elaine Steele installed the officers for 2011–2012. We are proud to have a gentleman now on our executive, the Rev. Peter Ruddell.

Our speaker, the Rev. Dr. Marjorie Ross, spoke on Action Réfugiés

Montréal and the Gaza clinic. She explained the difficulties refugees face and the help that ARM provides. The Gaza clinics serve women and children and focuses on expectant mothers and post-partum care. Ross also spoke of her personal travels in Palestine. We came away with a better picture of the conditions in Gaza.

The Rev. Peter Ruddell gave the closing Benediction.

-Jill Parry

Local

Mission Awareness Sunday service was held on May 1, at First Presbyterian Church, **North Pelham**.

An update ...

The **Saskatchewan Women's Missionary Society** was formed as a new structure in Saskatchewan in 2009. This was the outcome of the closure of the South Saskatchewan Presbyterian and the Prince Albert part of the North Saskatchewan Presbyterian. These closures occurred due to aging and declining membership.

The few groups remaining in Saskatoon were determined to keep the WMS alive in Saskatchewan. Our new executive structure reaches out to include contact members in Prince Albert, Beatty (Melfort), Qu'Appelle, Regina, Yorkton, Kipling, and Mistawasis. Our representatives continue to be active on the Synod Camp Christopher Committee and on the Personnel Committee for our Regional Staff Person.

On April 9, the Saskatchewan Women's Missionary Society held its second annual meeting since the new structure was formed. The meeting was held in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Saskatoon. Joan Sande and Margaret Mazurkewich began the meeting with singing. Jen Bell, our Regional Staff Person, led the Opening Worship with the book "Four Feet,

Our guest speaker was Carolyn Vanderlip (PWS&D), who spoke on refugees. WMS members from North Pelham and Rockway took part in the service.

Pictured are Jessica Aulph, organist/choir leader, and Trish and Kent Reynolds, leaders of the Kids' Zone, who were all presented with Certificates of Recognition for their contributions to the music and to the children of First Church, North Pelham.

Diane McMillan was

also presented with a Life Membership pin and certificate by our minister and a WMS member the Rev. Pearl Vasarhelyi.



Two Sandals.” The theme for the day was “Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World.” It was based on Isaiah 61:1, “the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has appointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, and to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners.”

President Arline Sanderson welcomed everyone. The Dr. Patti Polowick, our guest speaker, spoke of her involvement serving on the PWS&D Committee; statistics regarding refugees; and her trip to Malawi in 2009.

After lunch and more singing, Arline Sanderson constituted the business meeting with prayer and we dealt with the yearly business matters of the Saskatchewan Women's Missionary Society. Our registration fees and offering were allocated to the two WMS Together We Can! projects.

Adela MacDonald led the Memorial Prayer in remembrance of two long-time faithful members of St. Andrew's WMS (Daisy McIntosh and Marion Hislop). Patti Polowick installed the executive officers for this coming year. The afternoon closed with Worship and Communion, led by the Rev. Amanda Currie.

Forward in Faith

Although this *Glad Tidings* will be published months after the National Presbyterian Women's Gathering, Look In—Shout Out—Be Transformed, it is in fact just weeks after the event and I am still feeling energized by the excitement it generated for me.

Over 560 women gathered together for the May Victoria Day weekend at the Sheraton Parkway Convention Centre in Richmond Hill to worship, learn, and play together.

Our budget was one of the largest I have ever worked with and I was just amazed at all the different parts and pieces there were to all the activities that occurred over the weekend. There were times I was hugely excited and times when I was overwhelmed. At the end of the conference, I couldn't believe it had actually "worked" and we had succeeded in doing all the jobs that needed to be done.

At the event, people were so generous. The Sunday offering, that is to be sent through PWS&D to benefit young women and their education in Afghanistan, amounted to just under \$15,000.00. Add to that, another \$1,000.00 from the proceeds of the Saturday night concert.

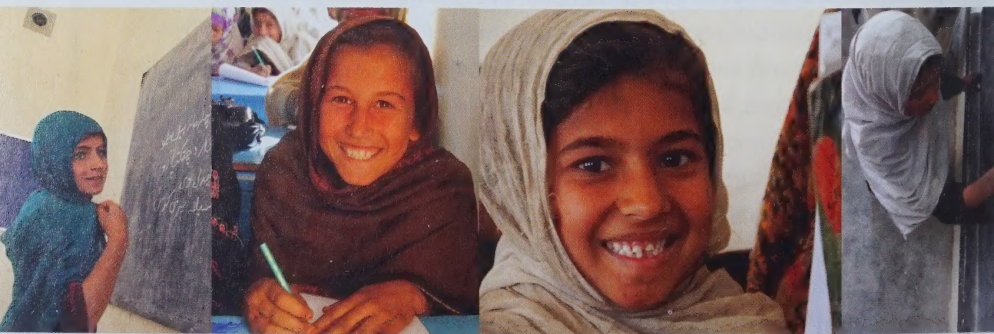
But the generosity didn't end there. Following The Rev. Margaret Mullin's presentation on Monday, many women came to us with donations for her work with Winnipeg Inner City Mission. These were passed on directly to Margaret so I cannot report what was given to this ministry.

The Book Room had the most sales ever tallied at an event totalling over \$22,000.00, and other vendors in the Marketplace also reported good sales.

Women laughed together, cried together, sang together, ate together, planned together, and were extremely generous!

Thank you!

Janet Brewer, Treasurer



Promoting Girls Education in Afghanistan. Photos from PWS&D.

Remembering

Elizabeth Snell
St. Andrew's Presbyterian
Church, Tweed, ON

Lois Alexander
Britton WMS
Knox, Listowel, ON

Dorothy Dunton
First Presbyterian
Church WMS
North Pelham, ON

Isabel Lowrie
Knox, Guelph, ON

Mrs. Agnes Smith
Willowdale Presbyterian
Church
Toronto, ON

Circulation News

Do you subscribe to *Glad Tidings* through your WMS group? If so, your group contact person is about to receive their annual mailing for subscription renewals.

Here are a few suggestions to make it easier for this person to collect subscriptions:

Have your money ready when she starts collecting.

Make sure your address is correct on the list.

If you have transferred from another group, please include the address label from your copy of the magazine.

If your group has disbanded, you can still subscribe to the magazine. Your name can either remain on the congregational list and a contact person is appointed, or your name can be transferred to our individual subscription list. If you wish to become a individual subscriber, please contact me.

Please note that the subscription rate for 2012 will remain at \$13.50 (plus applicable taxes): ON \$15.25; BC \$15.12; NS \$15.53; all other provinces \$14.18.

The deadline for renewing the magazine is November 1, so please ensure that you have your money ready when the *Glad Tidings* contact person begins collecting!



Planting Seeds of Hope for Generations to Come

How Planned Gifts Are Growing the Church and Its Mission

The steeple of Central Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, Ontario, with its distinctive rooster on top, bears witness not only to the new day that has dawned through Christ's planned gift of his life on the cross, but also to the lasting impact that our own planned gifts can have in the life of a congregation. Central Church has a long history of faithful members

including the church in their estate plans. Over the past ten years, Central's Endowment Fund has generated more than \$1.57 million to help restore Central's historic building, to enhance their music ministry and mission outreach, and to supplement their weekly offerings. Truly, the rooster on their steeple has something to crow about!



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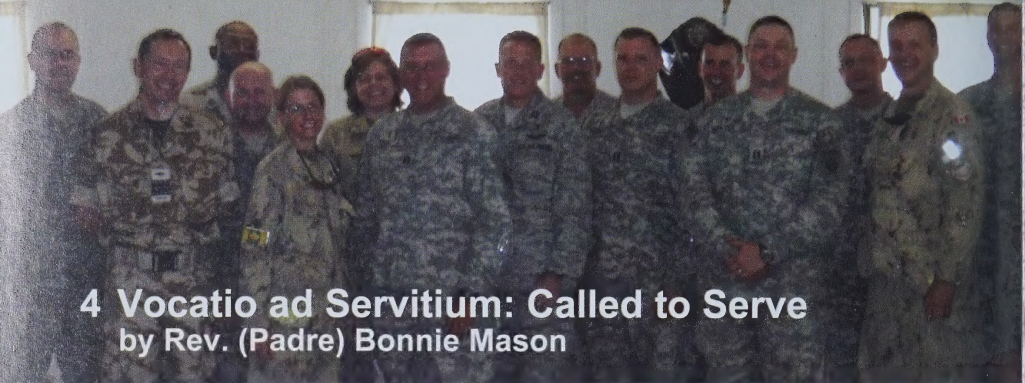
Glad Tidings

November/December 2011



The Birth of Jesus
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4 Vocatio ad Servitium: Called to Serve

by Rev. (Padre) Bonnie Mason

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November/December 2011

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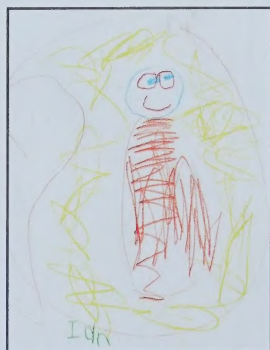
I am not one of those people who loves Christmas. In fact, I have to admit to a love-hate relationship with the season. First, having grown up in the church, I am sick of Christmas carols. Year after year, Sunday after Sunday, usually beginning in late November, we sing them. Like so many who complain about the Christmas songs in the malls, starting as early as November, I tend to complain about the Christmas carols in worship, beginning too early. I was thankful when the 'new' hymn book came out and it contained a good selection of Advent

hymns. Now, there is a little more variety in December, but I still get tired of the songs before the 25th!

I also wouldn't say I love the big traditional meal. It's not that I don't like to eat, it's just that I don't love a big turkey (or ham ... or duck ...) dinner. I would rather feast on a big bowl of pasta, with some great roasted vegetables. Or, maybe some Pad Thai. Even a large plate of fajitas would be more my style. But, I know for many, including my husband, Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without the turkey dinner. And thankfully, my husband tends to do much of the cooking on Christmas day.

And, don't even get me started on the materialism of the season. I do love buying gifts, but buying gifts for friends and family who need nothing, in overcrowded malls, seems like an exercise in futility. I struggle with wanting my children to have a great Christmas, complete with exciting presents, and with them seeing the meaning of Christmas beyond the stuff.

But, there are some things I love, even if some of the traditions have changed for me in the past few years. You see, I used to love the late night service at St. Giles Presbyterian Church in Ottawa ... an intimate worship service with friends sharing communion. Now, with



continued on page 22

Vocatio ad Servitium Called to Serve

by Rev. (Padre) Bonnie Mason

In 2008, the Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch published a document entitled, *Called to Serve: Strategy for the Canadian Forces Chaplaincy*. In this publication, the importance of the role of a military chaplain is outlined:

Humans are spiritual beings who ask spiritual questions of meaning, relationship, and self-awareness Truly effective service personnel are ones who are attending to spiritual issues with the same healthy attitude as they afford their physical and mental wellbeing. Consequently, the Canadian Forces has acknowledged the importance of spiritual wellness as a dimension of individual wellbeing. Military service, both for those who serve and their



families, all too often forces the individual to explore the deep cost of sacrifice. Fear, loneliness, death of a loved one, and life-changing injury are but a few of the experiences that can threaten a person's ability to function effectively unless he or she is willing to explore the deep spiritual questions that lie at the root of understanding oneself and the world. For this reason, the military community recognizes that chaplains, experienced in addressing spiritual issues, are a critical component in the care and support of our sailors, soldiers, air personnel, and their families.

Military chaplaincy is one of the few ministerial circumstances for where clergy actually live and work with the people for whom they serve. It is because of this very unique pastoral relationship that chaplains must truly love the people they serve to their very core because you get to see them at their very best and at their very worst, often under the most challenging of circumstances. It can be a very demanding, yet a profoundly meaningful and powerful ministry.

I have been blessed with a very diverse and rewarding ministry in my ten years as a chaplain in the Canadian Forces. I joined the military in August 2001—three years following my ordination. It was during my 13-week basic training course that 9/11 occurred, an event that changed



our Canadian understanding of our role in international affairs and once again reinforced the importance of the role of chaplains in the military. My first posting was in Halifax where I served as a chaplain with the naval fleet and sailed on Operation Apollo with the HMCS FREDERICTON, a six-month deployment in the Persian Gulf. During my final year in Halifax, I was posted to the Second Language Training School where I spent ten months studying French fulltime.

From July 2006 to July 2008, I served as an instructor and later as Course Director at the Canadian Forces Chaplain School in Borden. In June 2008, I was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Commander (LCdr), and was posted to 17 Wing

Winnipeg, where I served three years as the senior wing chaplain. My responsibilities included advising the Wing Commander on issues of morale and counselling trends on the Wing; supervising the unit chaplains; business planning; and preparing monthly reports and briefing notes both for the military chain of command and the Chaplain Professional Tech Net. It was during my time in Winnipeg that I spent three months in Afghanistan providing pastoral care to our troops under very challenging circumstances, both inside and outside the wire. It was astounding to me how when one's life is on the line that the great existential questions of life, such as: Is there a God; If there is, does he/she care about me; and Is there a life beyond this one, suddenly take on an urgency and an immediacy that is seldom felt as profoundly as when we feel that we are out of harm's way. This is another very good reason to have dedicated, fit, and well-trained chaplains with a penchant for

operations in close proximity to our troops in all circumstances.

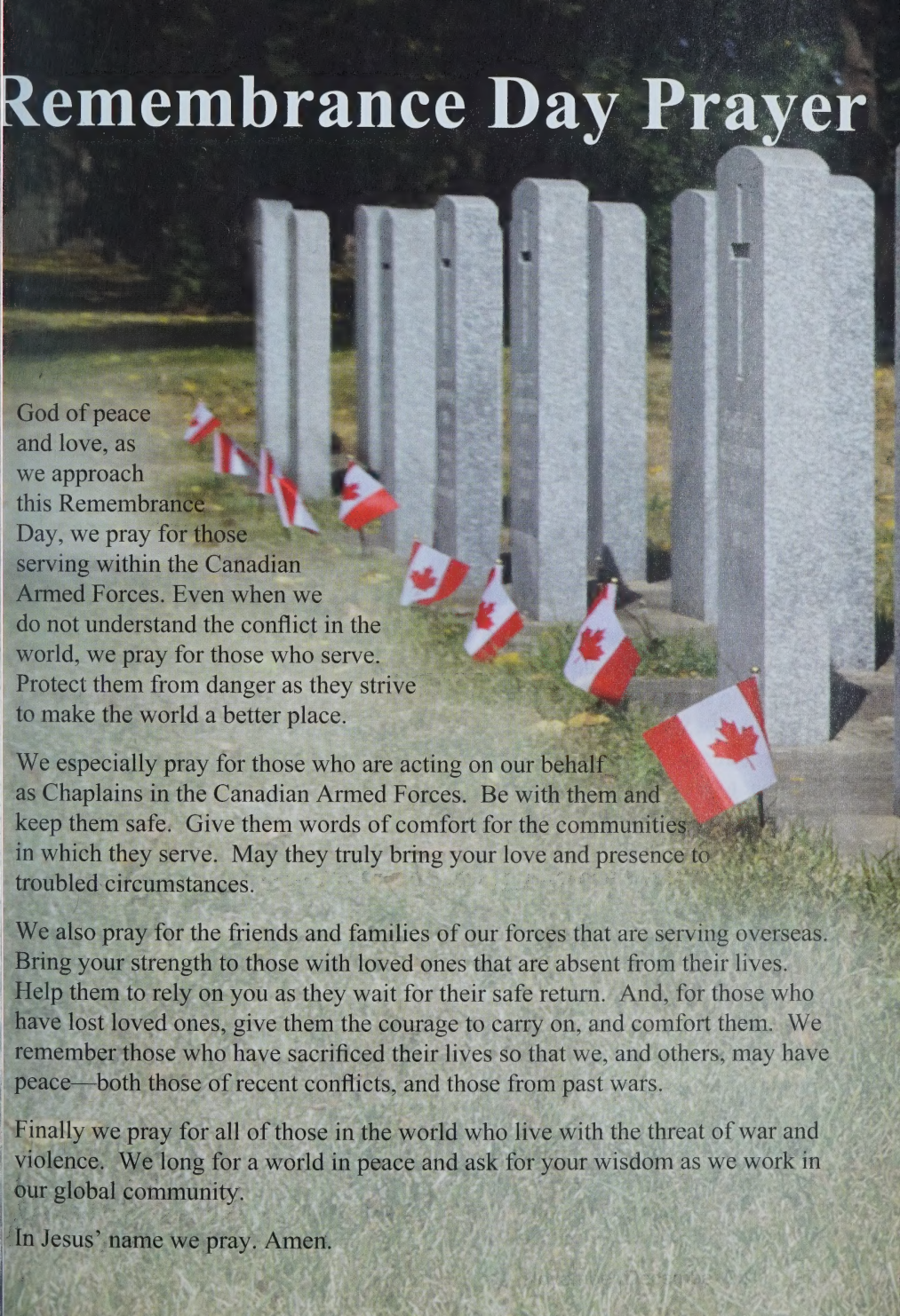
In July of this year, I was posted to Colorado Springs, Connecticut, where I work for NORAD (North American Aerospace Defense Command) as the NORAD/CNOS Head Quarters Canadian Forces Senior Chaplain. I serve as special staff advisor to the Senior Canadian Commander in NORAD and the Commanding Officer of the Canadian Forces Support Unit. It involves, but is not limited to, preparing the chaplain annex to strategic plans. I also provide pastoral care to the Canadians posted in Colorado and throughout the United States. To that end I will be visiting our sailors, soldiers, and air personnel who are working in a number of locations within the Continental US.

It is an honour to minister and to represent The Presbyterian Church in Canada to soldiers, sailors, air personnel, and their families wherever they serve. Please keep my Canadian Forces personnel and their families, as well as myself, in your prayers.



Chaplains in Afghanistan

Remembrance Day Prayer



God of peace and love, as we approach this Remembrance Day, we pray for those serving within the Canadian Armed Forces. Even when we do not understand the conflict in the world, we pray for those who serve. Protect them from danger as they strive to make the world a better place.

We especially pray for those who are acting on our behalf as Chaplains in the Canadian Armed Forces. Be with them and keep them safe. Give them words of comfort for the communities in which they serve. May they truly bring your love and presence to troubled circumstances.

We also pray for the friends and families of our forces that are serving overseas. Bring your strength to those with loved ones that are absent from their lives. Help them to rely on you as they wait for their safe return. And, for those who have lost loved ones, give them the courage to carry on, and comfort them. We remember those who have sacrificed their lives so that we, and others, may have peace—both those of recent conflicts, and those from past wars.

Finally we pray for all of those in the world who live with the threat of war and violence. We long for a world in peace and ask for your wisdom as we work in our global community.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Supporting Our Soldier

by Alexis McKeown



Remembrance Day has always been abstract for me. I do appreciate those who serve and every year I do listen to CBC radio programming on Remembrance Day, and I am often brought to tears by it. But, I have never had war touch my life. I wonder if this year will be different for me.

My brother-in-law is serving as a Captain for the Canadian Armed Forces in Kabul. We always knew Craig would be stationed overseas. He did his undergrad at RMC (Royal Military College) and has been working his way up the command ever since. He wants to serve wherever he is needed. Craig once explained it to us simply, he wants to put his training to use.

I didn't know what to expect when he was deployed. Would I be constantly checking world news

online? Or, would I hide my head in the sand? I aim to land somewhere in between. I find myself wanting to be there with him. This is slightly odd because Craig has not lived in Ontario since his graduation. He has been living on his own in Edmonton for years with only email, phone calls, pictures, and a couple of yearly visits.

While in Edmonton, he has more than survived. He has created a life of his own there. Yet, now I find myself packing boxes of my children's art (sorry Craig), letters, small gifts, and other things from home. I do not know what has changed for me. Why is that connection so important to me now?

I don't want anyone to think that I'm ignoring the dangerous situations that Craig's work puts him in while he's in Afghanistan. I understand. We

heard about the kidnapping and death of an American in Kabul and we hear lots of the other media coverage. I am sure the whole family feels the fear. However, I am proud of Craig for the work, study, self-discipline, growth, compassion, and determination that have landed him in Kabul. I also know that he is making the most of the situation.

I laugh at his personal struggles and challenges. He gets excited over things like the Cooper test, a physical fitness test. To get the maximum number of points, you need to run 1.5 miles in under 8:45, do 58 push-ups, 58 sit-ups, 14 pull-ups, and bench press 245 pounds. He was disappointed with his 98/100. The 7000-foot elevation, “killed my run time,” as he put it. He is also attempting to befriend the wild cat population on the base, bringing smiles to many lips. I even smiled when officials had to release information about rabies in wild animals. I wasn’t sure rabies would stop Craig.

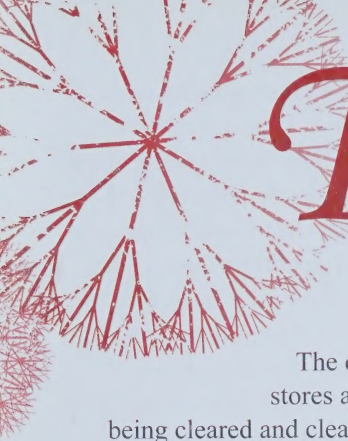
I am surprised and humbled by the way Craig feels. I always think of him as the younger, cocky brother. Not the grown-up who is now serving in very real situations. He movingly described the 9/11 service held on the base on September 11. He always thinks to soften the effect on the family of any bad news that comes from the media about Afghanistan. We hear his joy in getting mail from the family.

Although Craig has many more months to serve, I can’t stop myself from looking forward to March. I find myself telling my children we will do this or that when Uncle Craig gets home. It is a hopeful feeling, a faith that Craig will return. I’m sure he’ll be changed, he’ll be stronger, and he’ll have many stories to share.

No matter what one’s opinion is of where, why, and how our politicians use the army, I feel soldiers need to be supported. That is what I will be doing on November 11. I will still remember, but I will also lend my support to troops serving Canada today. I forwarded a version of this article to Craig before having it published to get his blessing and asked if he had anything to share. This was his response:

I’ve been trying to think of anything to add, but I don’t think I can. I mean there’s been a lot more Canadians who’ve done and sacrificed a lot more than I have so I wouldn’t want to come across like what I’m doing is all that extraordinary. I’m just doing the same job I was doing in Canada, but here in Afghanistan. I don’t want to make it look like I’m doing anything heroic.

This is our soldier to support—Captain Craig McKeown, Maintenance Officer for the Canadian Contribution to the Training Mission in Afghanistan (CCTM-A).



The Sounds of

The day after Labour Day, the centre aisles of the department stores are full of Halloween candy. Meanwhile, the side wall is being cleared and cleaned for—yes; you guessed it—Christmas stock. Too soon, I say, Christmas is a religious holiday, not a merchandising opportunity.

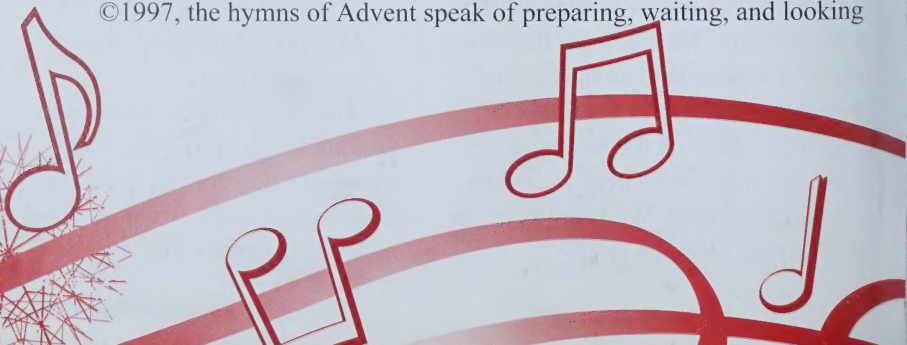
Last year, 2010, Christmas music began to seep into our consciousness sometime in November. As I shopped, I found myself humming along. Too soon, I thought, the American Thanksgiving hasn't happened yet. There was a time when it was an unspoken rule that Christmas music was never played on radio or television until December 1. This insidious moving back is called the 'Christmas creep'.

Christmas is in the hearts of Christians all year long. Sometimes I play Christmas music in the summer to celebrate the fact that my Saviour is indeed born. But like any other occasion, I prefer to celebrate the actual day and the days immediately before and after to keep the meaning of the season alive and special—my own birthday included! For me, no blaring carols, no sparkling coloured lights, no Santas ringing bells on street corners until December, please. Alas, I know my pleas will fall on deaf ears.

My childhood memories of Christmas are all contained in a few weeks of excitement—baking, a flurry of snow, a bustle of shopping, wrapping, decorating, and the delightful tastes and smells that permeate the house only at Christmas. My own children cannot believe that we actually decorated our tree on Christmas Eve. Sugar plums did dance in our childish heads that night. And the precious songs and stories of God's great love born among the people rang in our hearts and minds.

Looking through *The Book of Praise*, The Presbyterian Church in Canada

©1997, the hymns of Advent speak of preparing, waiting, and looking



Christmas

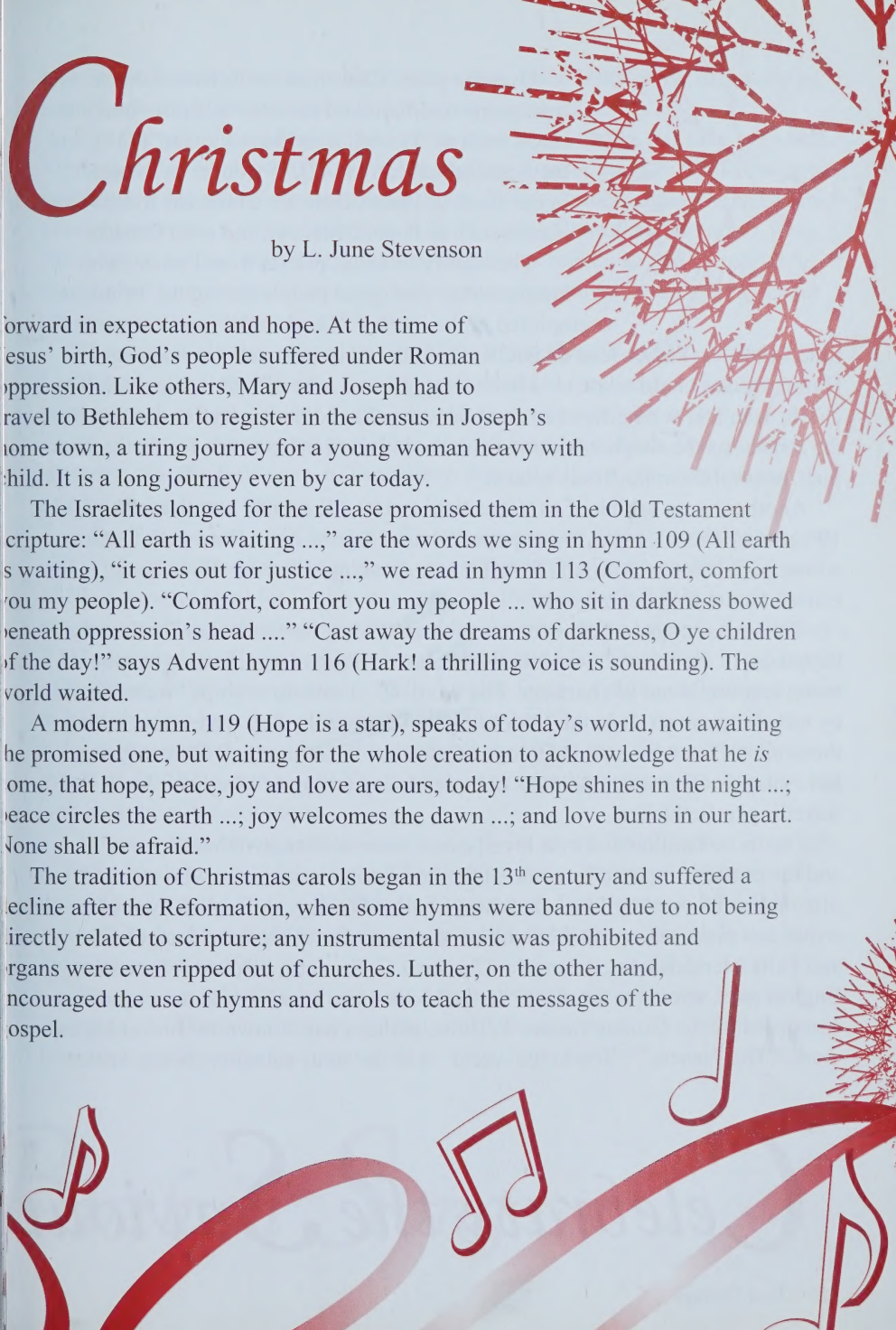
by L. June Stevenson

forward in expectation and hope. At the time of Jesus' birth, God's people suffered under Roman oppression. Like others, Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem to register in the census in Joseph's home town, a tiring journey for a young woman heavy with child. It is a long journey even by car today.

The Israelites longed for the release promised them in the Old Testament scripture: "All earth is waiting ...," are the words we sing in hymn 109 (All earth is waiting), "it cries out for justice ...," we read in hymn 113 (Comfort, comfort you my people). "Comfort, comfort you my people ... who sit in darkness bowed beneath oppression's head" "Cast away the dreams of darkness, O ye children of the day!" says Advent hymn 116 (Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding). The world waited.

A modern hymn, 119 (Hope is a star), speaks of today's world, not awaiting the promised one, but waiting for the whole creation to acknowledge that he is come, that hope, peace, joy and love are ours, today! "Hope shines in the night ...; peace circles the earth ...; joy welcomes the dawn ...; and love burns in our heart. None shall be afraid."

The tradition of Christmas carols began in the 13th century and suffered a decline after the Reformation, when some hymns were banned due to not being directly related to scripture; any instrumental music was prohibited and organs were even ripped out of churches. Luther, on the other hand, encouraged the use of hymns and carols to teach the messages of the gospel.





Over the years, Christmas carols have come to us from many traditions and cultures: African-American carols such as “Go, tell it on the mountain” (133), and the Appalachian carol (142), “I wonder as I wander.” In our Book of Praise, there are Christmas hymns from places, such as Poland, Malawi, and even Canada.

The history of Jesuit priests from France, who ministered to aboriginal people during the 1800s, is exemplified in the hymn, “’Twas in the moon of winter-time,” (144) as Father Jean de Brébeuf told the story poetically in language the Huron Indians could relate to: a babe wrapped in a robe of rabbit skin, hailed by chiefs from afar with gifts of fox and beaver pelt, and hunter braves coming from the forests, as the shepherds came from the hills and fields to see for themselves that *Jesous Ahathonhia*, Jesus is born.

Another hymn I think of as ‘Canadian’ is 169, “Il est né” because, although a 19th century French carol, it was popular where I grew up in Cornwall, Ontario, whose population was around 50% French-speaking. *Il est né* (He is born), echoes Father Brébeuf’s words.

Christmas songs, mostly secular, such as “Frosty the snowman,” reflect the happiness of the season. Some, however, have religious significance in spite of being seemingly out of character. The words of “I saw three ships” were written by travelling minstrels in the Middle Ages. Supposedly they were about taking the skulls of the wise men to Cologne Cathedral in Germany. Different lyrics have since been written, the most common today telling of Mary and Jesus travelling to Bethlehem.

The more familiar and best loved carols were written by famous poets, and the music composed by some of the best known musicians, who were often commissioned by local churches. Charles Wesley, an English hymn writer and preacher, wrote the familiar words of “Hark! the herald angels,” and Felix Mendelssohn, the music. Christina G. Rossetti, beloved 19th century English poet, wrote the words to “In the bleak midwinter,” while the music was composed by the famous Gustav T. Holst, perhaps best known for his orchestral work, “The Planets.” “Joy to the world” is in the same category, being written

Celebrate the Saviour

by another English theologian and hymn writer, Isaac Watts, with the music by Lowell Mason, a leading figure in American church music.

The story of “Silent Night,” one of the most loved carols, has long been told. A priest, called Fr. Joseph Mohr, in Mariapfarr, Austria, in 1816 wrote the gentle words while his school teacher friend, Franz Xaver Gruber, added the music two years later for the Christmas service at St. Nicholas Church in Oberndorf, Austria. Legend surrounding it says that the organ was broken so that the children singing had to memorize the music and were accompanied by the guitar. There are no records authenticating this story.

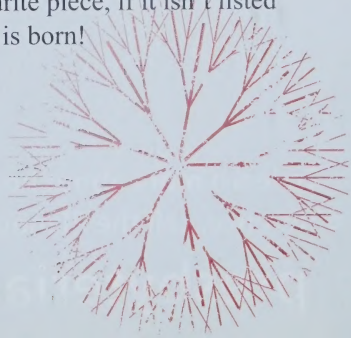
The carol is also associated with soldiers in the First World War pausing the hostilities to sing; their voices rose in German and in English, proving that love is stronger than hate. “Silent Night” appeals to our senses with its soft, sweet image of a quiet evening, snow falling, and the wonder of birth. It is unlikely, however, that the little town of Bethlehem was quiet that night with its streets filled with bustling visitors.

“The Twelve Days of Christmas,” often a source of parody, actually has special symbols and hidden meanings. It is said that in England between 1558 and 1829, it was not legal for Catholics to practise their kind of Christianity in private or in public. Catholics were stopped from worshipping because King Henry VIII alienated the Catholic Church and established his own church, The Church of England, for his own purposes. “The Twelve Days ...” supposedly was written to help children learn about their Catholic religion. The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus who died on the cross; the two turtle doves are the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, and so on. These stories and many others can be found on the web or in library carol books.

A favourite of many, usually sung as a solo by artists from Plácido Domingo to Elvis Presley, is “O Holy Night.” The French poem “Minuit Chrétien” was written by poet and wine seller Placide Cappeau, and put to music by Adolphe Adam. The hymn was the second piece of music to be played on the first AM radio broadcast in 1906.

There is a rich history behind the Christmas music we so love to hear and sing along to. Find out the story behind your favourite piece, if it isn't listed here, and celebrate the Saviour's birth in song. He is born!

Birth in Song



Planting Seeds of Hope for Generations to Come

How Planned Gifts Are Growing
the Church and Its Mission



Photo credit: Herb Gale

Bethel Church in Scotsburn, Nova Scotia, is filled with the sights and sounds of an increasing number of children at play. After receiving \$5,000 to start an endowment fund for Christian Education, Bethel invited others to help grow the fund with gifts from their assets, especially gifts of stock. Soon the congregation had raised over \$100,000, and in the years following has received an additional \$50,000 in bequests.

The annual income from the fund has enabled them to hire a part-time CE worker who oversees a new mid-week children's ministry.

visionaries

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presbyterian.ca/plannedgiving



COPING WITH HOPE

by Jan McIntyre

I love Christmas. I always have. Our family has many traditions and rituals surrounding the holiday season. Christmas Eve is one of our wonderful family traditions. Our congregation has two services and being a pastor's family, we often attend both. As kids, our children would want to rush the last people out of the church because then we could go home and open presents. There had better be new pyjamas for everyone. The one year I didn't buy them, I was told that we have to have new PJ's as that's tradition. Christmas morning is great, especially the fun of getting the turkey in the oven, using the roasting pan of my Grandmother. It cooks the turkey to perfection. Tradition!

But lately, I am finding Christmas has a tender bittersweet quality to it. Our daughter lives in South Africa

with her husband and three children—my grandchildren. I see families with grandkids and my heart aches to be with mine. We have had marriage break-ups in our extended family so now the big family gatherings are different. No longer does the tradition of my brother-in-law stirring the gravy happen and the role has gone to another. The kids are getting married so we are in the “who's turn is it for Christmas” scenario. Christmas is not the same. I miss the old and, at times, struggle with learning a new normal.

I am learning to live with the intermingling of joy and pain. There are few families that escape this struggle. Grief touches us in many ways, be it from the death of one we love, strained relationships, divorce, loss of our job, or addictions in the family. For those in the midst of grief,

Christmas can be especially difficult. Often this day, more than any other, means family gatherings. During these gatherings, we are so acutely aware of the “empty chair.” The anticipation of the holidays can come with much fear. So, how does one cope with grief during the holidays?

Many people, who are grieving, would just rather skip the holiday and wake up on January 2. When going through seasons of grief, it can be hard enough to get through a regular day, but adding the expectations and busyness of Christmas can escalate feelings of anxiety, loneliness, anger, and depression. Grief doesn’t take a holiday. We need to recognize that

this advice, “If we could control our crying, it would be great, but we can’t. Tears come at some of the most inopportune times. I think the way we look at tears is important. Tears are one of God’s gifts because sometimes we don’t have the words and tears just come. Let them come. Take out a tissue and don’t apologize. Never apologize for something that is a gift from God. Take charge of it and say, “I am crying because I’ve experienced a devastating loss.” That’s all you have to say. You’re alright. You don’t need to be fixed.

Also it can be helpful if you set the tone that you are comfortable with. It helps others to know how to

REMEMBER THAT OUR GRIEF JOURNEY IS UNIQUE. BE CAREFUL OF THE “SHOULD” THAT OTHERS, OR WE OURSELVES, PLACE UPON US

holidays will be tough emotionally, relationally, physically, and even spiritually. Cry it out to Jesus: “Lord, this hurts. It’s harder than anything I have ever done. I can’t do this alone.”

The first thing to realize is that we will have emotional ambushes and they can be overwhelming. One of the greatest fears for many is that when tears come—and they will—they will be embarrassing and will make others uncomfortable. This is a normal response. H. Norman Wright offers

approach you. If you are comfortable talking about your loved one, do so. Also remember, that it is okay to laugh and enjoy yourself at such events and be free of the grief for a time. Robert Devries says, “Don’t be embarrassed about laughing because even in the midst of our sorrow there’s joy. It’s all mixed up together, and it doesn’t come in sequences.” If, during social events, the emotions are too raw, it is quite alright to excuse yourself and leave. No apologies are

needed. Others will understand.

We can also try to prepare for those hard-hitting moments. As we look to the coming events, we can try to predict which will be the hardest to face. Being prepared to face deep emotions can help us face them. We may be fearful, but we will be better able to handle our responses when we anticipate and prepare to accept them as normal.

It is also helpful to know and remember other people's grief will be different than ours. Some may want to keep all the old traditions; others want to go away and do something completely different. Some want lots of people around them and others just want to be alone. There may be many different expectations placed upon us by family or friends. Remember that our grief journey is unique. Be careful of the "shoulds" that others, or we ourselves, place upon us.

It is important to have a plan for the holiday. In planning for what we can and cannot do, we set the expectation for ourselves and the family, thus allowing for flexibility. This can be a time of healing as the family talks openly and honestly about what each person may need to make the season meaningful.

Grief is a process and a journey. It is good to develop coping skills that can act as a roadmap along the journey. As a Parish Nurse, I walk alongside many who are in the midst of loss and I am grateful to be able to

offer helpful books and pamphlets. Here are suggestions for your personal or church library: *Psalms of Lament* by Ann Weems, *The Empty Chair* by Robert DeVries and Susan Zonnebelt-Smeege, and *Decembered Grief, Living with Loss while others are Celebrating* by Harold Smith. GriefNet.org has an excellent article "How to Help Ourselves through the Holidays" and Victoria Hospice has a handout "Grief: Special days and holidays." (www.victoriahospice.org)

Our congregation offers a *Surviving the Holiday* seminar. This DVD presentation shares how other people, who have experienced grief, deal with the varied emotions around Christmas. The response from those who attended has been very positive. For more information, visit the website www.griefshare.org. (I used many of their suggestions in preparing this article.)

For a church family to offer a safe place to bring your emotion is very valuable. We hold a Christmas Tears service in early December. In this worship service, we sing carols, hear words of hope from scripture, and experience a candle lighting liturgy. The service is reflective, moving, and many tears, hugs, and tissues are shared.

While such resources provide good insights about grieving, I am learning that there is so much more that is needed than just a "self-help" handout. There is Jesus. We need to

focus on our Saviour and the reason we celebrate the holiday. Christmas sometimes becomes little more than a celebration of family, and too often we add the birth of Jesus as an afterthought. Even as Christians, we can get caught with the secular flurry and miss the birth. When we are grieving, we see the world through the lens of our loss. It is very hard to look beyond our pain. But that is what we are being called to do—not to negate our pain, but to view the pain through Jesus and the cross.

Laura Petherbridge, a grief counsellor, says, “The baby and the cross should remind us: God’s story is a story of love. God so loved the world that he sent his one and only son (John 3:16). That’s because God sees me. God sees my pain, and he knows my loss. What Jesus did in coming to save me is enough. That gives me hope, and it is that hope that we most desperately need. The baby in a manger is what we are looking for. No matter what the circumstance. No matter what the loss. That baby is our hope.”

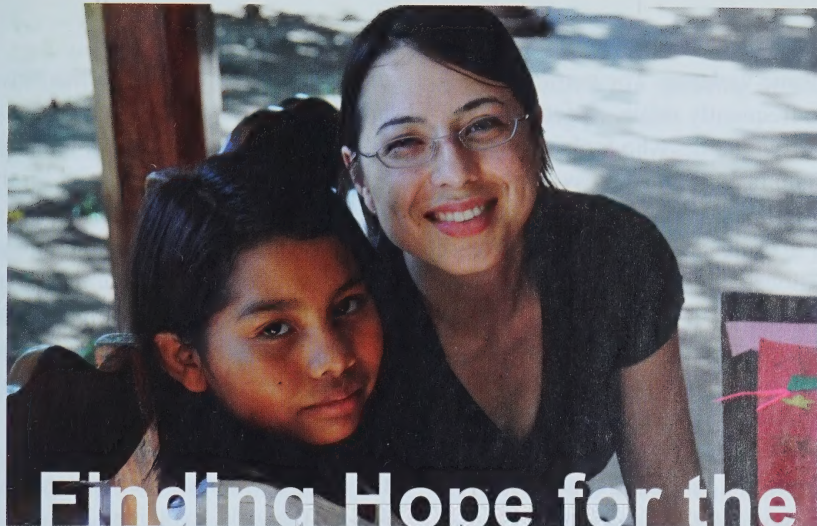
“Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome this world.” (John 16: 22,23) These words of scripture bring perspective to our circumstances. The holiday season is a reminder of **HOPE**. As one person said, “Each day, no matter what the season, is a day that God provides hope for this life and for eternal life.” Our God is faithful, unchanging, and a loving God. Our God keeps his promise of love. We can trust him with our fears and emotional pain. God knows what we are feeling, so take the time to tell him your struggles. Like the psalmists of old, cry out to God with your lament. Give him your tears. Jesus came to wipe away every tear and to give you strength and stability.

Jan McIntyre is the Parish Nurse at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Duncan, BC.

Ann Weems in the closing lines of her Psalm of Lament Thirteen calls us to this hope:

*I come to you, Holy One,
for I know my salvation
Is not in “coping” but it is in hope,
Hope that comes only from you.
O God, in your time
the scales will fall from my heart*

*And I will see again, and seeing, I
will fall
to my knees in thanksgiving
To you, O gracious One,
Only to you.*



Finding Hope for the Future in Nicaragua

by Zuzka Ellis

“*Agua, agua, agua!*” I heard the street vendors shouting near my bedroom window, as they sold water to passing motorists on Managua’s busy streets. “Oh no,” I groaned, “They’re awake.”

It was 5:30 a.m. and, in my opinion, it was much too early to be selling water, even if it *was* 35 degrees outside. Their incessant advertising made it impossible to sleep any longer, and Nicaragua’s capital city was far too hot to pull the blankets over my head and drown them out. I conceded it was time to get up.

As the morning coffee brewed and the rest of The Presbyterian Church in Canada’s Youth in Mission group shuffled down for a breakfast of beans, rice, and fried plantain, I was grateful for the opportunity to join

them as a Presbyterian World Service & Development staff member, not only to visit our program partners and see the work our church supports, but to also see how this trip would impact the youth of our church for years to come.

Today we were visiting the PWS&D supported shelter, *Casa de las Niñas*, where young girls who were sexually abused find a safe place to stay as they renew their hope for the future and heal from their experiences.

The program director, Maria Isabel, explained that girls who come to the shelter stay for an eight-week intensive emotional recovery program. The girls ranged in age from 10 to 17 years, and they had experienced some form of sexual trauma such as assault, kidnapping, human trafficking, or

domestic violence. The perpetrators were frequently relatives, family friends, or adults who took advantage of them in Managua's busy markets. The program aimed to teach the girls how to protect themselves from risky situations and counsel them toward greater emotional health.

Each week, a different discussion topic was integrated into the group activities, individual counselling sessions, play therapy, art activities, and personal reflection time. The girls stayed at the *Casa* during the week, and spent weekends at home if it was safe, or at the home of a relative, in order to maintain their family connections and to apply what they are learning in their family context. The weekly topics included trust and security, self-esteem, processing emotions, identity and sexuality, assertiveness, human rights, communication, and making goals for the future. Over the course of the program, the girls learned to accept

their emotions and respect themselves in each of these areas.

As we entered the *Casa*, the girls greeted us with big smiles and bright eyes. We introduced ourselves by playing a dancing game and laughed endlessly at each other's antics. When the game was over, we sat in a circle and the atmosphere became somber as the girls shared their healing journey at the *Casa*.

Seventeen-year-old Monica, the energetic and natural leader among the girls, explained how the activities and therapy were helping them overcome stigma, blame, and hopelessness. "Even though it is something terrible that happened to us, it won't stop our lives," she said with confidence.

Fourteen-year-old Carlita said softly, "Considering that when I came, I thought everything was my fault. It's been very helpful for me because now I'm not afraid. I realized my life has to keep moving forward."



Fifteen-year-old Sonya chimed in saying, "The process of being here helped me a lot because when I came I was completely destroyed—I wanted to take my life. Now I understand what happened is not my fault. Now I accompany the new girls and show them support and solidarity, and share with them that life doesn't end when this happens, but it's just the beginning."

Maria Isabel explained that once the girls finish their eight weeks, they return to the *Casa* for afterschool programs and individual counselling sessions for an additional 6–12 months. As new girls enter the program, they find support from one another, and it sparks their hope that they too can take positive steps to overcome their experiences.

As I looked around the circle, I marveled at how far the girls had progressed. I could see the Canadian youth were visibly moved by these testimonies and several of them expressed their gratitude to the girls

for their bravery in speaking up about their healing journey.

Later that evening, the girls gave us dance lessons as Nicaraguan pop music blared through their stereo. As I slipped off my sandals and added them to the growing pile of shoes at the side of the dance floor, I noticed a tiny pair of size 5 shoes in the mix. It suddenly occurred to me that it wasn't just girls who suffered abuse who were here, but that most of these girls were young children. I could feel my heart pounding in my chest as anger at the injustice of what they experienced boiled under my skin. "They're just kids," I screamed silently in my head, unable to tear my eyes from the shoes.

At that moment, a new song came over the stereo and I turned to see a group of Nicaraguan and Canadian girls throwing their arms in the air, giggling the night away. Seeing them in this light, there was no trace of the pain of their pasts; these girls were carefree and full of joy. The



contradiction was jarring, but I forced myself to join in, reminding myself that this was the place to find hope and healing.

As I drifted off to sleep that night, knowing I would wake in a few short hours to the familiar call for the morning's water, the words of fourteen-year-old Gabriella rang softly in my ears: "We're not here to forget what happened to us, but to overcome it."

Although sometimes it's easy to focus on the trauma these girls have experienced, their hope is so much more powerful than their pain, and

it inspires me to hope in God for the future. When I think about the girls at the *Casa*, I see young women who hold their heads high with a renewed confidence and outlook on life. I see young women who are brave enough to face their pasts and who are poised to embrace whatever their futures hold. I respect the strength and courage it takes to walk a mile in their shoes—especially if they're only size 5.

Zuzka Ellis is the Communications Assistant for Presbyterian World Service & Development.

*Names have been changed.

Editorial

continued from page 3

little ones, we opt for a late afternoon family service. It's a lot louder, and more rambunctious, but it still has meaning for myself, and more importantly, for my children. (And I can still attend a late-night service once the children are asleep.)

Preparing for Christmas is also a lot different than it used to be. Perfect cookies have been replaced with ones made with the kids—still tasty even with all the sprinkles! The setting up of our nativities, now includes setting up a Little Tikes plastic nativity (perfect for little ones to explore the Christmas story), and likely one or two homemade nativities made by my son. Relaxing Christmas Eve celebrations have been replaced with the fun of opening up new pajamas, hanging stockings, and tucking excited ones into bed.

However, one thing has never changed—the meaning of Christmas for me and for my family. It is the story of love. It is the story of a God who loved each of us enough to become one of us. The birth of Christ, whether read in worship from the poetic King James, shared in a Bible study from *The Message*, or read from one of our many children's Bibles, is still an incredible story. It is a love for each of us, and a love we share with one another.

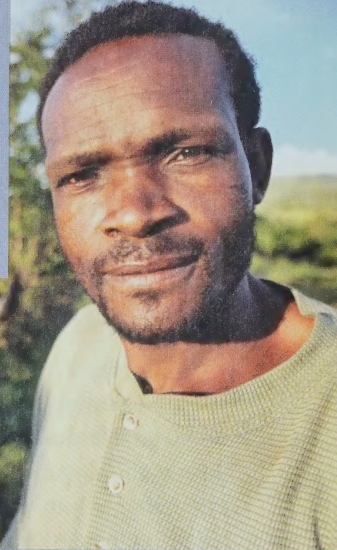
I pray that with this Christmas, whatever your traditions, that the story of God's love will be real for you and for your family. It truly is the only reason to celebrate!



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Christmas Worship

by Tori Smit

Call to Worship (Sung or Spoken):

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus (#110) (if spoken, verse one only)

First Lesson:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1:1-5)

Opening Prayer:

Gracious and loving Lord, our Creator, our Redeemer, our Wisdom, as we come to worship you this day, as we come to hear the story of our faith, may we come with open ears and open minds and open hearts so that we may hear as though for the very first time. This we ask in Jesus' name, amen.

Second Lesson:

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said,



‘Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.’ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.’ Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’ The angel said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. Then Mary said, ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’ (Luke 1:26–35, 38a)

Reflection:

It is impossible to overestimate the significance of this visit. For almost a century, Judea had been under Roman occupation. If there was ever a time for a messiah it was now. However, this Messiah did not fit the bill. The people wished for a king, or a governor, or a general. They wanted someone who could rise up against the tyranny of the age; someone with credentials; someone with power. That God should choose a young woman in Nazareth in Galilee to bear the Son of God is to turn the tables on every expectation of synagogue and state put together. It was time for an entirely new way.

It is impossible to underestimate the significance of this act. In a time when an unwed mother could quite literally be put to death, even by her own family, Mary’s act of obedience defies logic. It makes no sense that someone so vulnerable should accept responsibility for the Son of God. We, who have power, and we, who have control, and we, who are safe, must learn that to say yes to God is to say yes to the unexpected and yes to risk.

Carol: Hope is a Star (#119)



Third Lesson:

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

Once when he was serving as priest before God... there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' (Luke 1:5-8a, 13, 16, 17b)

Fourth Lesson:

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. (John 1:6-9)

Reflection:

There are two parts to this story. The first is a story of an old woman and an old man. In those days, children were a sign of God's favour. For Zechariah, a priest, and Elizabeth, his wife, not to have children was, if not a mark of sin, at least concerning. Still, even that was in the past. Elizabeth's child-bearing years were long past. Until today. Today, a miracle happens. Today, God demonstrates that all are part of this divine story—the young, the old, the helpless, and the strong. With God, all things are possible.

The second part of the story has to do with preparation. John was born to prepare the way. We were born to prepare the way; to direct people's attention to the coming Messiah. Christmas preparations are easy to list—food, gifts, family, and friends. The angel's visit reminds us that we are not preparing for Christmas; we are preparing the way for the Lord! How might we prepare the way, in our homes and our communities, with those who know the story and those who have never heard?

Fifth Lesson:

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting,
the child leapt in her womb. And
Elizabeth was filled with the Holy
Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry,
'Blessed are you among women, and
blessed is the fruit of your womb.' (Luke 1:39-42)



Carol: What Child is This? (#161)

Sixth Lesson:

And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God
my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One
has done great things for me, and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts
of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to
the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants
for ever.' (Luke 1:46-55)

Offering

Prayer:

Leader: You have given us the greatest gift of all in your son Jesus Christ.

People: Now we bring our gifts to you.

Leader: You have given us the responsibility to share this good news.

People: It is our privilege to be able to share Christ's love.

Leader: These gifts are a symbol of our love for you,

People: and a portion of our whole lives given to you,

All: through the power of Jesus our Saviour, amen.

Seventh Lesson:

In those days, a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world
should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while
Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered.
Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city
of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and
family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was

engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger’. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us’. So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. (Luke 2:1–19)

Reflection #1:

Who do you tell? If you have witnessed a crime, you tell the police. If you have witnessed a historic event, you tell your children and grandchildren. What if you had witnessed the most important event in all creation? The shepherds couldn’t help it. They went, they saw, and they could not keep quiet. They “made known what had been told them.” In other words, they shouted it from the roof tops! For most of us, this story is as old as we can ever remember. It becomes too familiar. In our world, in our age, fewer and fewer know the story. We do, who will we tell?

Reflection #2:

We know that the real treasures are not gold and silver and things, the real treasures are what we, like Mary, keep in our hearts. The words of loved ones, the memories of children and special times are what we cherish. It is in this innocent comment, this little sentence, “But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart” that we see Mary as a mother, one of us. It is in this moment that we experience the full humanity of Jesus and of his

family. It is at this precise moment that we realize that even as Mary knew love, so do we know love and because of this, we too can treasure and ponder this story in our hearts

Carol: Silent Night (#154)

Eighth Lesson:

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me'.") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. (John 1:14-18)

Prayer:

We praise you our Lord for this amazing season and this wonderful gift. It is so familiar and yet ever new. As we hear these words of love, we pray for those who have not heard them; those around the world and those in our own neighbourhoods. Give us the courage and the words to speak to share this good news which is for all people. We pray too for those places in the world where hatred and war and hunger and sorrow make it difficult to believe in the Prince of Peace. May we join in their cries for justice and for peace. We pray for those in our own circles of friendship and love, who find it difficult to celebrate this season due to illness, or trouble, or the loss of a loved one. May they find comfort and may we likewise bring comfort and healing.

Finally Lord, as we ponder all this in our own hearts, may we be touched anew by the power and wonder of your love, a love so great that you sent your son for us and for our salvation. All this we ask in Jesus' name, amen.

The Blessing:

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named

Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. (Isaiah 9:2, 6,7a)

Carol: Joy to the World (#153)

Christmas at Crieff Hills

by Marylu Pentelow

The days surrounding the Christmas season are special no matter where you are. They are times of memories, celebration, fellowship, re-uniting, and worshipping—in celebration of the Advent season. According to Wikipedia, Advent is “a time of expectant waiting and preparation.” At Crieff Hills, we feel the month of December is very much part of Advent. Located just south of Guelph, Ontario, Crieff Hills is the National Conference & Retreat Centre for The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Open year round, day and overnight programs are offered, as well as a variety of facilities available where families, friends, and groups are able to lead their own programs.

Throughout December, everyone is welcome to Crieff Hills for some special activities: Christmas Buffet Lunches; a Turkey Dinner followed by an evening of carols; an outdoor Living Bethlehem journey; families re-uniting; and church groups sharing special meals.

Living Bethlehem ... come on a journey

For many, Crieff's Living Bethlehem

has become a part of their Advent or Christmas tradition. This is a shared event hosted by Crieff Hills along with five local churches. Families, grandparents bringing grandchildren, youth groups, and churches use this as an intergenerational outing. As well, individuals from every walk of life enjoy this unique Sunday evening event. There is calm as all ages, and old and new friends, gather in the warmth of the First Christmas.

The journey begins with a Modern Day family preparing for Christmas—wrapping, baking, gift selecting, and tree trimming. Grandpa, meanwhile, goes about refocusing the family and begins to read aloud the story of the First Christmas. As the scene goes dark, a voice calls to the crowd, “This way ... come this way.” We are transported to another time. Going back in time, Wisemen, who have heard of an upcoming birth, but are lost, greet us, the travellers. These Wisemen continue on their search as a new voice is heard along the torch-lit path ahead. We find, guarding the streets of Bethlehem, Roman guards. Cold and tired, they demand to know why, at this time of night, we are trying to

enter Bethlehem. Next, we see the shepherds. Shepherds on a hillside suddenly have their world changed as angels appear and share the “Good News.” We share in the beauty of the angels along with these shepherds. Finally, coming upon the stable, the crowd celebrates the Holy birth. Mary and Joseph share these moments with us—quietly, of course, so as not to wake the babe.

“To see the smiles of knowing the story, the joy on children’s faces, the laughter at the humanity of the characters, makes it all worthwhile. It has become part of our family tradition.”

December Luncheon Buffets in the Country

Throughout December, Crieff hosts mid-week luncheon buffets at Maclean Hall. This dining room at Crieff is located in an original one-room 1874 school house, which was in use as a school until 1964. While it no longer echoes the voices of excited school children in December, its festive look is the background to the voices of individuals, who come together to share a meal. These luncheons are attended by church staff, or local small businesses, who take this opportunity for a staff Christmas lunch. Others are hiking groups, who come for a winters’ hike on the Crieff trails with their destination being lunch at Maclean Hall. Friends also meet friends using

Crieff as a central location that allows for visiting over a relaxed lunch. We also have a “Healthy Heart” group, who gather for their annual Christmas lunch, members of book clubs meeting over lunch; and parents sharing a meal with their children who are studying for University exams.

For those wishing to have an evening dinner meal, arrangements can also be made. For example, we have a WMS group, who enjoy holding their December meeting at Crieff with dinner being prepared and served to them in this festive setting.

Turkey Dinner Wrapped in an Evening of Carols

Another tradition at Crieff is the Annual Turkey Dinner which is an evening of fellowship while enjoying



the beauty of Crieff. We begin by gathering for hot cider and cookies at St. Luke's Lodge while enjoying a crackling fire. We enjoy the coziness as we watch the setting of the sun. Then we move to Maclean Hall, where we are welcomed by the warmth and fragrance of a turkey dinner. A torch-lit path then leads us to the conference hall to welcome guests to an evening of music and carols. Surely, this is an Advent evening.

Family Gatherings Retreat House Style

Many extended families are large in numbers. So large in fact that it is often impossible to gather in one home for Christmas. The Retreat Houses at Crieff have begun to be popular spaces enabling families to meet, prepare, serve, and share a meal together. Some families spend the entire weekend together, treasuring this additional time together, and celebrating family in a Winter wonderland. On a week day, if time is tight, the option is there to join together just for the day.

In the days after Christmas, we find that Crieff is home to family groupings, who gather for a time of fun and relaxation. One such family has been coming to Crieff for 20 years! As the family has grown, additional Retreat Houses have been added. When asked about some of the things they do when they are together, the response was, "... we have bonfires, play baseball in the snow (all three generations joining in), have a concert with contributions from all the families, enjoy a turkey dinner, sing carols, play games, have treasure hunts, play instruments, and tell stories. We all laugh hilariously ... for many, Christmas at Crieff is a highlight."

For more information on the December events at Crieff Hills or any other inquiries, please visit our web site www.crieffhills.com or call 1-800-884-1525. And for those who can't make it to Crieff this Advent, find your own ways to celebrate the season with friends and family in meaningful ways.



Make & Do Christmas Cards & Crèche

by Jan Godfrey and Chris Saunderson

One of my favourite things about Christmas is taking time to enjoy my family as we prepare for and celebrate Christmas together. This book will provide a great day or two of Christmas crafting for my five-year-old! The book includes a cut-out Christmas Crèche that children press out and then assemble. It's bright and colourful, and will sit proudly beside one of our other Nativity Christmas scenes.

In addition, this book has 12 Christmas cards that children can press out, colour, and distribute to friends, Sunday School teachers, or relatives.

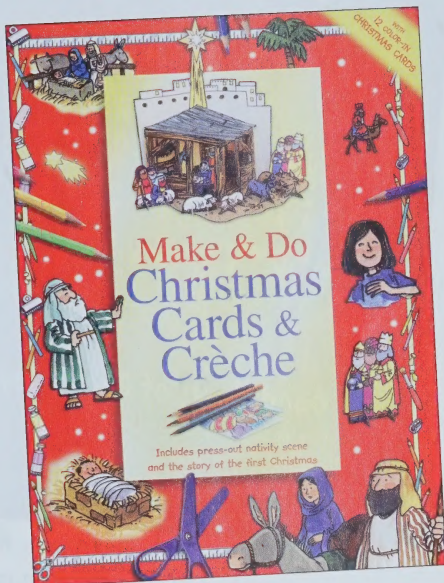
Finally, the book includes the story of the first Christmas. What a great opportunity to tell the story while your children can move the pieces to create the scene using their own crèche. I can even imagine involving older children with this activity by using a digital camera or video camera to capture the story on film!

I would suggest this book for families with children as young as three. For children to work independently on the book, it would be great for children, ages six and up. What a great gift for families, or a great project for a child and grandparents on a December afternoon!

Good News of Great Joy, Daily Readings for Advent From Around the World

by Neil Paynter and Peter Millar

If you are looking for a joyful Advent devotional, this is not for you. But, Jesus did not come to a world filled with joy. Jesus came to a world that was hungry, thirsty, unjust, and full of fear. This book is filled with stories from around the world—stories of HIV positive children in Uganda, villagers intimidated by soldiers in the West Bank, or those facing discrimination in Japan. Those who don't share stories, share their own experiences, sometimes negative, but again





their experiences come from all over the world. Thankfully though, the writers don't just leave us with the challenging sides of these stories. They also relate it to Advent, the Season of Hope.

I love that this book doesn't just gloss over the pain and suffering in our world. We are encouraged, even in what is often a joyful season, that our communities and our world suffer, but there is hope. The angel said, "Do not be afraid." And for those of us who are surrounded in our own struggles and uncertainty this season, we can share this hope.

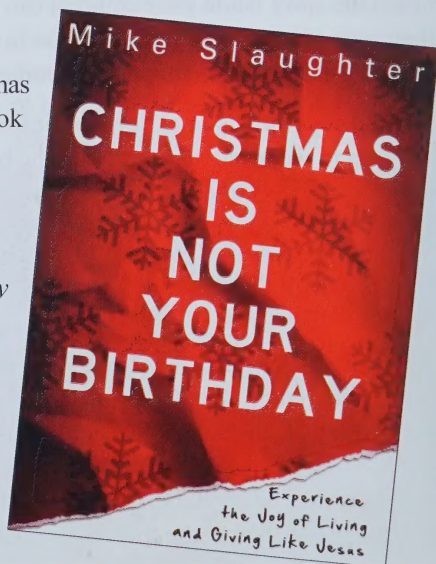
Each devotion includes a scripture reading and prayer.

Christmas is Not Your Birthday, Experience the Joy of Living and Giving Like Jesus

by Mike Slaughter

I was drawn to this book by its title, Christmas is Not Your Birthday. The back of the book also drew me in,

Every year, we say we're going to cut back, simplify, and have a family Christmas that focuses on the real reason of the season—Jesus. But every year, advertisements beckon, the children plead, and it seems easier just to indulge our wants and whims. Over-spending, overeating, materialism, and busyness rob us of our peace and joy and rob Jesus of his rightful role as the center of our celebration.



This book reminds us that Jesus resisted the world's obsession with wealth and power. Sometimes we tend to view Jesus as a giver, not the person who forms our faith and values. We also tend to 'sanitize' the Christmas story, and forget the reality of an unwed teenage mother, living in poverty, giving birth in a stable.

Overall, I liked this book. Mike Slaughter has a wonderful way with words that does make one think. He also shares some creative ideas for making Christmas more of a celebration of Jesus' birth. For example, he suggests giving as much to charity as you spend on friends and family at Christmas. This would encourage us to maybe reduce our giving to those who don't need anything, and to help those in need. He also goes beyond just changing our Christmas practices to changing our entire life. He encourages us to become better parents, serve others, and tell others of the Good News of Jesus Christ everyday, not just at Christmas.

***The Christmas Countdown,
Creating 25 Days of new Advent
Traditions for Families***

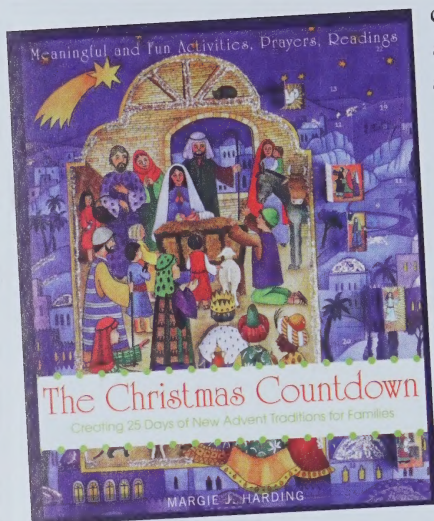
by Margie J. Harding

As a family, we are not good at daily family devotions. We do often read Bible stories to our

Nativity

We sit just us two
As candles flicker around us
The service is through
We sit just the two of us
The music envelops my heart
Her tiny hand slips into mine
A tug, a pull to the car
No time
She stops by the nativity
It seems real to her
Is it to me?
It seems real to her
I open the church door
It's getting late
My daughter kneels on the floor
A smile upon her face
Her fingers touch the baby's face
And in that moment I see
That I don't have time to race
That here I must be
Her hand in mine
We look at the nativity
Enfolded by love divine
And surrounded by peace

by Maureen E Kowal



children, along with other stories at night, and we always end the night with a prayer and the singing of the Aaronic blessing, but we don't have a formal devotional time. However, two times a year, Advent and Lent, we do try to set aside time for family devotions.

This book has some interesting activities and devotions for families. Families begin by making an Advent wreath together. They also make wrapping paper, Christmas cards, gingerbread people, and candle holders. For me, having these assigned to certain days would not work for our family. We would love some of the activities, but would not take the time to do them all.

Also, I think this book is more for families with older children, perhaps ages 8–12. The scripture passages are long, and there are some puzzles that older children would enjoy. As well, they suggest songs to sing which would only work with children old enough to read.

I am certain I would use parts of this book throughout the Advent Season, but overall I think there are better family books out there, especially for a busy family.

The Journey, Walking the Road to Bethlehem

by Adam Hamilton

I enjoyed this book. Like Adam Hamilton's *24 Hours That Changed the World*, this is a fairly easy read, but the content is quite deep. Hamilton, an United Methodist minister, uses historic information, archaeological finding, and his own personal theological reflection to provide us with new insights into the story of Christ's birth. It provided me with a new excitement for the story I had heard repeated so many times. It also allowed me to ask new questions that I had not considered. Perhaps I had not considered how much Mary's willingness to accept God's plan for her played into the story. Have I thought about Gabriel and his presence as God's messenger? How did he appear? What did he look like? Am I open to God's messengers in my life today? Or, why did

God choose to be involved with the shepherds—the uneducated, usually poor, shepherds who usually smelled from their work.

You can also purchase a DVD and leader's discussion, which I think would be a great way to explore Hamilton's work as a group.

The Journey, A Season of Reflections

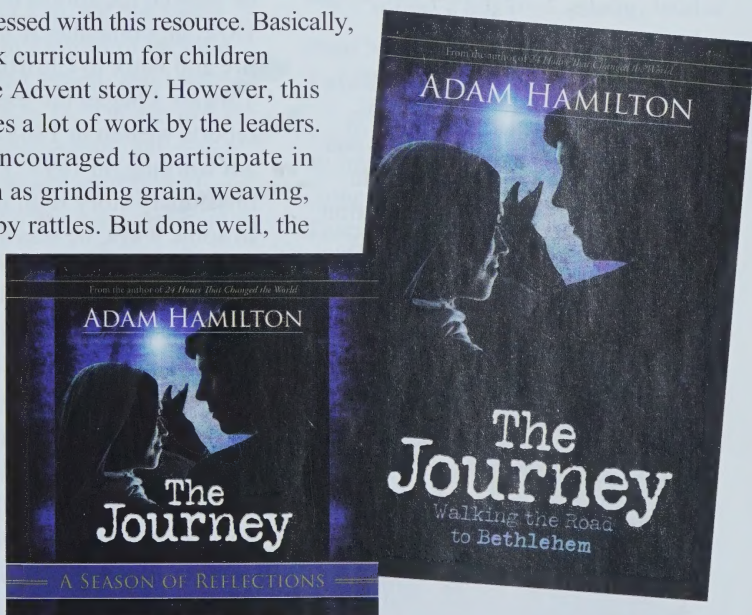
by Adam Hamilton

This small book contains 28 brief readings for Advent, each including scripture, a reflection, and a prayer. Reading through several of these made me want the book for my own Advent devotions. Adam Hamilton has the ability to renew the Christmas story for me. He gives me thoughts and ideas to think about that I had not reflected on before. He is easy to read, yet has depth in his reflections.

The Journey, Walking the Road to Bethlehem for Children

by Daphna Flegal

I was very impressed with this resource. Basically, it is a five-week curriculum for children ages 4–8 on the Advent story. However, this resource requires a lot of work by the leaders. Children are encouraged to participate in activities, such as grinding grain, weaving, and making baby rattles. But done well, the children would have such a memorable experience of the first Christmas that would have a great impact on their celebrations.



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Mission In Action

Louise Gamble Taiwan

Another year has passed and I am still living in Taiwan. This amazes me, since I have “retired” twice! But I am enjoying my life, and hopefully continue to serve the Taiwan Church in a useful way. I am still living and working at Tamkang Middle School, which was founded in 1914. “Middle School” is actually a misnomer. Tamkang has a kindergarten, a junior school (grades 7–9) and a senior school (grades 10–12).

Four years ago, an elementary school was started (completely bilingual—Mandarin and English) and thus our campus offers a complete comprehensive package of education should a child wish to stay with us throughout their total early education! If you were to drop in on us almost

any day of the week, you might get lost in the crowd of 2700 students winding their way to their classrooms.

This year, I have spent most of my time on a new project. I have been asked to transcribe all the official documents of George Leslie MacKay, the first missionary to North Formosa (as the area was called at that time). His book *From Far Formosa* was published in 1896. He volunteered for missionary service in 1868 and when he viewed the shores of Tamsui in 1872, he immediately dedicated his life and work to Christian service in Taiwan. I began the transcription with reports written in 1868 and presently am working on 1895. The MacKay missionary story is an intriguing one. In some ways, he was a man of his own times, but in other ways he was truly exceptional. He was rare in his choosing to marry a Taiwanese national. He was also unusual in insisting that foreign and national workers have equal status on a mission council. This work is making me more and more curious about mission history and theory!

Because of this new project, I did not teach as many classes this year. I continue teachers’ classes for English Bible Study. In the Spring term, we focused on some excerpts from Acts, and in the Fall, our focus was on some of the Epistles. I also helped teach

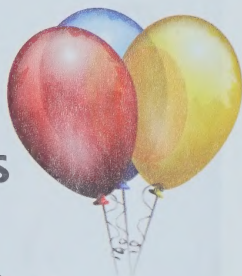


English conversation for teachers. My central plan is to make these classes as enjoyable as possible.

It was a treat to be invited to the 140th Anniversary Celebrations of the Sin-lau Hospital in Tainan. (It was started by the English Presbyterian Church, and through many ups and downs, it now has a beautiful new building). I travelled to the south with three other workers in the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan—one a long-term national staff person and two missionaries from Japan and Wales, respectively. During the course of our trip, we discussed the abundance in Taiwan of capable leadership in the Church, and I asked why it is necessary for Taiwan to have international missionaries. My good friend on the national staff quickly responded with, “We need you here to remind us of the solidarity we share as part of the universal Church.” And thus we became aware again that our task here is to bear witness to our shared faith. Except for economic purposes, Taiwan has been gradually excluded from more and more international involvement, and even some Christian organizations are being challenged to only relate with China.

So I continue to enjoy being part of the life of the Church here, even if my life is spent mostly with the past! And what about my own future? This MacKay project will keep me busy until it is completed, and then I

Overseas Staff Birthdays



December

15 – Rick Allen, Kenya

18 – Andrew Paul Allison, Cameroon

27 – Mary Gorombey, Hungary

29 – Jackie Hoekstra, Malawi

am looking forward to my retirement (again!) in Canada.

Paul McLean Taiwan

In February 2010, we reached an important milestone when we completed our translation of the Old Testament. For the remainder of the year, we began our second and final revision of the New Testament & Psalms, and the book of Proverbs. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) recently designated 2012 as “The Year of Hakka Mission,” leading up to the 150th Anniversary Celebration of the arrival of the Gospel in southern Taiwan in 1865. The PCT’s Hakka Mission Committee is warmly encouraging our Bible translation team and the hymnbook translation team to do all we can in 2011 to complete our two projects as soon as possible, so that we can present people with new Hakka Bibles and hymnbooks at the



Paul McLean with members of the Hakka translation team

PCT General Assembly meeting in April 2012. That puts lots of pressure on us to get the job done in a timely, yet ever faithful, and accurate fashion. Since this is all God's work, we pray that the Lord will help us achieve this very worthy goal.

During my three trips to Taiwan in 2010, I had the joy of visiting and preaching in 15 Hakka churches and participating in several special events. On each visit to Taiwan, I boarded the commuter train in Chung-lak early on Saturday mornings and travelled one hour north to Taipei to preach at the Hakka fellowship, which meets in Sung-lien PC. Rev Phang Tet-kui (who is the gifted chairperson of our Hakka Bible translation committee) and three other retired Hakka pastors share the preaching and visiting. The fellowship averages 40–50 people. They love to worship God in Hakka, share a light Hakka lunch after the

service, then go and visit Hakka friends or new acquaintances on Saturday afternoon or evening.

One day during lunch, a visitor to the fellowship, Mr Chen, sat beside me and cried because it was the second time in his life that he had heard a “foreigner” share the Gospel in his mother tongue. He asked me if by chance I had known of another foreigner, who could speak Hakka who had visited his home village outside of Chia-yi in southern Taiwan 15 years ago. It turned out that the foreigner was me! Mr. Chen was a young teenager then. The Hakka Evergreen (seniors) evangelism team and I had sung Hakka Gospel mountain songs beside his father's rice paddies. It had made a deep impression upon him. His favourite high school teacher happened to be an elder in a nearby Presbyterian church. She invited him to church, and in due

course he became a Christian, in spite of his parents' opposition. Mr Chen and I prayed together that day for his parents, his wife, and his children, and gave thanks for God's marvellous leading in his life over the years.

One weekend in early June, I rode the high-speed train to visit four southern Hakka churches. I spoke first in Kaosiung at a gathering of 30–40 Hakka Christians, who have moved from the Hakka countryside into the big city. They are gradually trying to plant a Hakka church for families who, like them, have moved away from their Hakka villages. I visited Rev. Chhi Yuk-lin, a highly respected Hakka pastor, who is now retired. Along with several other Hakka ministers, he was a member of the very first Hakka Bible translation team in Taiwan in the 1950s and 1960s. They experienced numerous challenges in those pioneering years and only the Gospel of John was ever published.

I also preached in Ka-tung PC. Rev Yi Chat-fung was a member of our translation team for several years, but is now busy there in pastoral ministry. Elder Chheu Vanchhong

is a key leader in this rural Hakka congregation. He is a 74-year-old retired school teacher and gifted Hakka musician and song writer, who rides the train to join our Bible translation team in Chung-lak two to three days a week whenever I am in Taiwan. During those days, he and I share my apartment, as well as meals, and uplifting conversations. Elder Chheu exudes the joy of the Lord and is a tremendous encouragement to our team.

I thank God for the continued support from leaders in the PCC, PCT, and the Bible Society of Taiwan, which enables me to share in Bible translation with our partners in Taiwan. I also want to thank all the congregations in the PCC, plus AMS and WMS groups, who are making it possible for Hakka people in Taiwan to read, proclaim, and apply God's Word in their own language, so they can be effective witnesses for Jesus Christ as they share—Song-ti thungsiak su''-ki^en-ng`in ke fuk-y^im—the Good News of God's compassion and love for the whole world.

Corrections

A Tale of Two Mikes

In the September/October Edition of Mission in Action, we had a letter from Mike Birks, a Young Adult Intern in Nicaragua. Unfortunately, we credited this to Mike Burns. Mike Burns is a missionary in Malawi! We apologize for this error, and wish both Mikes well in their work.

In the Society

Presbyterial

Niagara Presbyterial held their Spring Rally at Drummond Hill Presbyterian Church on April 27. Our guest speaker, the Rev. Martin Wehrmann, told us about Niagara Presbytery's plan to sponsor a refugee and his family from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Lotshaka Odimba Steve, his wife, and five children, are currently living in a refugee camp in Namibia. A sub-committee has been formed and has begun work, but help will be needed from every congregation in the Presbytery.



Anna Davidson, President of the Vancouver Island Presbyterial, being served by RCMP Officer Cpl. Barb Cottingham at Knox Presbyterian Church in Sooke.

The WMS groups at Scottlea and Drummond Hill were involved in preparing banners and presenting them for the cross Canada Kairos 'Roll with the Declaration' journey.

Our annual picnic was scheduled for June 22, and Margaret Combe writes, "Despite a morning rain and the forecast of more rain and possible thunder, 21 ladies attended the picnic. It was held at the peaceful setting of Donna Strong's cottage on the shore of Lake Erie. Seated on the relatively dry blacktop driveway, a sumptuous potluck picnic lunch was enjoyed by everyone. Christine Cummings said grace and Bonnie Roland conducted several brain-teasing games.

It was announced that Nancy Wehrmann and Christine Cummings had been presented with Life Memberships by the Scottlea WMS group, at a recent luncheon. Also, Peggy Hughes blew out the lone candle on a cake baked by Karen Lethbridge to celebrate Peggy's birthday that day. Incidentally, the sun almost shone on the gathering.

Local

The Women's Missionary Society of Knox Presbyterian

Church, in **Sooke**, held a successful Strawberry Tea and Take-Out event in June.

A highlight was when four members of the local RCMP were piped in. To everyone's delight, they were dressed in their red serge. They served the guests cake and fresh strawberries with whipping cream, and were able to have a conversation with those in attendance.

Earlier, 285 of the desserts were delivered to the Sooke business community as an outreach project. Proceeds from the Strawberry Tea and Take-Out will be used for the work of Knox Presbyterian Church and Women's Missionary Society.

-Amy Chwojka

The **Côte-des-Neiges** Presbyterian WMS/Women's Association celebrated its 65th Anniversary on June 11. Sixty people attended from different churches and we had a tremendous meeting with Mrs. Janet Manson, our past president, who as guest speaker, presented, Who directs our ways?

We displayed pictures and collages depicting the past years. We had a blessed time, and completed the evening with a delicious international pot luck supper. We praise and thank God for past years, and pray that His work will continue to prosper within the organization.

"Lo I am with you always even to the end of age." Matthew 28:20



The four RCMP officers who served at the Tea at Knox Presbyterian Church in Sooke.

In Memoriam

Marion Mundell

"I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content." Philippians 4:12

At Marion Mundell's funeral on May 19, 2011, her daughter Beth spoke about her mother's steady courage and cheerful demeanour. Beth recalled that when she had asked her mother how she managed to remain cheerful while living with a colostomy for almost 30 years, Marion said her strength came from these words of the apostle Paul: "I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content." Through music, poetry, and service Marion shared her contented life with family, friends, and community.

Marion's extended family was important to her. As family historian, she also recorded marriages and births, and prepared a customized family tree for each family member. Marion enjoyed playing Scrabble and other word games, and every Christmas, she captured the year's events in a poem which she sent to friends and family. She wrote poems for other special occasions as well, sometimes setting them to music.

Her main avenue of service was through the WMS. Norma Raynard, from Lucknow, remembers how passionate Marion was about the society, and how she took an interest in all aspects of its work. She faithfully attended the annual presbyterial meeting until very recently. Her absence was noted with sadness as the attendees surmised that only ill health would have kept her away. Over the years, Marion was an active member of the WMS in Belmore, Gorrie, Wingham, and Listowel. It is believed she was instrumental in establishing the Belmore WMS, where she served as president. Meetings at which she presided were always full of music. She was also president of the Maitland Presbyterial (1969–1971) and the Hamilton and London Synodical (1975–78), and served on the WMS Council from 1975 to 1978. She was skilled in running meetings, and was always a support to those who followed her in leadership. For many years, she attended and provided leadership at the women's camp at Camp Kintail (the camp her father, The Rev. Dr. Charles MacDonald, helped to found and finance.)

Marion died on May 17, 2011 in her 92nd year. (Shortly after her funeral her husband, Alvin, fell and fractured his hip. He passed away a few weeks later on June 11, a month short of his 93rd birthday.)

Written by Marg Henderson

Forward in Faith

It is hard to think of the Fall, and all the activities soon to start, when all I can see today is blue sky, beautiful water, and lots of trees at Tobermory, Ontario.

When this *Glad Tidings* publication comes out, our meetings will have started, Christmas plans will be underway, and activities of all kinds will keep us busy with our families and Church families.

We will be winding down toward our year-end and the financial year-end, too.

Your groups will be encouraging their members to send in their donations before the “books” close for the year and your Presbyterials will be doing the same to their groups.

Our national donations seem to be dwindling each year. The trend seems to show a decline of approximately \$30,000 every year, and I’m sure you know how difficult it is if our congregations show that kind of deficit. We are blessed to have funds from which we can draw to cover our shortfall. But, how long can that go on without causing some very grave concerns?

I would urge you to consider your donations to the WMS. Your donations help cover your own WMS office and staffing costs, donations to the national church budget, and for Synod/Synodical regional staffing. Your donations also cover the costs of our Council and Council Executive meetings, our President’s costs, travel for the WMS, and many other smaller things, allowing the organization to continue its work.

I wish to extend a *thank you* to all, who do support the Women’s Missionary Society within The Presbyterian Church in Canada. It has been the mission backbone of our Church for over 100 years supporting Christ’s church in Canada and around the world.

Yours in His service,
Janet Brewer, Treasurer

President’s Itinerary

November 3–5

Council Executive Meeting, Toronto

November 7–9

Life and Mission Meeting, Crieff

November 20–21

Assembly Council, Crieff



Circulation News

When we first began the audio version of *Glad Tidings*, we had 60 subscribers, now we are down to 15. With your help we can increase the number of subscribers for this important ministry. Do you know of anyone in your congregation who is sight impaired? If so, ask if they would like to receive the *Glad Tidings* on CD? Then, just give the individual's name to the *Glad Tidings* secretary in your congregation, or send us their name, and we will add them to the list. Regular subscription rates do not apply to the audio version of the *Glad Tidings*, though a donation to assist with the costs is always appreciated.

Hopefully by the time this issue of *Glad Tidings* is published, we will have received most of the subscription lists from congregations. It is helpful to have the lists in the office by the deadline of November 1 to ensure that all changes, additions, and deletions are processed for the January/February issue. If you no longer have a *Glad Tidings* secretary, please feel free to contact us directly to renew your subscription.

Remember, that promotion of the magazine is an ongoing process. It does not end after the subscription lists have been returned to the office. A subscription to *Glad Tidings* will make a nice Christmas or birthday gift for a friend, relative, Sunday School teacher, or your minister. With your help, we can increase our subscriptions for 2012!

Katherine Allen

Pass Me Along

Please help to promote *Glad Tidings* and the work of the WMS.

When you have finished reading this edition, encourage:

Your Church Organist to read, *The Sounds of Christmas* (p. 10)

A Parish Nurse, or someone who has recently lost a family member, to read, *Coping With Hope* (p. 15)



Remembering

Susannah MacMillan
Dewar's Presbyterian
WMS/St. Andrew's WMS
Arnprior ON

Jessie Campbell,
St. Andrew's WMS
Arnprior ON

Kathleen Ogg Moss
St. Andrew's Presbyterian
WMS, Carleton Place ON

Elizabeth Moore,
Sarah-Dunning Auxiliary,
Knox, Dundas ON

Mrs. Charlotte Tully
Dorothy Lukes WMS
Knox, Midland ON

Evelyn Freer
Ruth McLean Auxiliary
St. Andrew's, Petrolia ON

Ann Cook,
West St. Andrews and
Myossio, Knox,
St. Catharines ON

Wanda Johnston
St. Andrew's WMS
Stirling ON

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Miss Beatrice Nash
Mrs. Isabelle Adam Schepp
St. James Presbyterian
Evening Auxiliary
Winnipeg MB

The Rev. Dr. Irene Dickson
First Presbyterian
Afternoon Auxiliary
Winnipeg MB

The WMS ... Did you Know?

Do you know your national WMS staff? The staff consists of:

- Sarah Kim, Executive Director
- Susan Clarke, Book Room Manager
- Alexis McKeown, Program and Marketing Coordinator (part-time)
- Colleen Wood, Editor of *Glad Tidings* (part-time)
- Katherine Allen, Administrative Assistant/
Glad Tidings Circulation Manager
- Alana Martin, Resource Consultant,
The Book Room
- Pasha Sharman, Financial Officer
(part-time)

The Staff of the WMS wish you a Merry Christmas!



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Glad Tidings



Connecting you to the world ...

Glad Tidings is the mission magazine of the Women's Missionary Society, The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Six times a year you will be challenged by inspirational articles, hear from mission workers from The Presbyterian Church in Canada, find useful devotional and worship materials, be challenged to action, and enjoy book reviews, poetry, and more. *Glad Tidings* is available in magazine format, large print, and on CD.

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